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BONNIE GOES LC

2016 Triumph Bonneville: still breaking all the rules

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BONNEVILLE
HISTORY



KTM 1290 GT RIDDEN

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Touring Super Duke

160BHP DUCATI MONSTER 1200R

Thrashed: Ducati's most powerful
naked street bike ever built

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PAGES
OF TRAVEL &
ADVENTURE



December 663

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John Milbank



It pays to listen to people when they're explaining things. I'll remember in future.

To grab the chance to speak to Jeremy McWilliams this month, I visited Silverstone for a KTM track day. The company had laid on the event for owners of the 1290 Super Duke R – a while back, demand had outstripped supply, so KTM offered those who pre-ordered from the next batch the guarantee of a bike, plus a day running it round the track with development rider and ex-Moto GP racer McWilliams.

I was lucky enough to be offered the chance to ride some of the bikes at the event, including a race-spec 390. One of KTM UK's top guys led me to the tiny machine; "It's never been ridden, so take it easy..." And that's when the Magic Roundabout music filled my head, and I stopped concentrating on what he was saying. "Ooooh, shiny bike," was all I could think.

Pulling away from the pits I kept stalling it. Weird – I'd clicked down to first. Then onto the track, gas it, change up, and nearly fall off. I changed up, not down! It turns out that one of the important pieces of information I missed was that this was a race gearbox, so upside-down (or right-way-up, depending what era you relate to more). It took about three laps before I stopped running wide into corners and slashing my speed with a screaming engine driving out of them.

It was further proof that you don't need big power to have fun. But then I tried the 690... with the gearbox as I expected it, I was much more relaxed. So I took the 1290 out. And it was fast. But it was totally controlled.



During a break, I'd been talking to a very fast mate who'd been telling me how he had – of course – turned off the ABS while racing around the track. I didn't bother, and having spoken to McWilliams about it, I now realise I didn't need to.

Motorcycle technology has progressed almost immeasurably – no more is it a case of a good rider being able to 'beat' the electronics. The computing brains stuffed into the little boxes on our bikes can – when perfectly programmed – be next to transparent. The only time I was aware that the Super Duke was thinking for me was as I nailed it out of the corner onto the back straight – the front wheel would just glance off the ground for a split second. I didn't feel the power change, but the KTM was doing all it could to keep me driving forwards. Awesome.

"But it's stopping new riders learning the skills," some might say, "what happens when it fails?" To a point, yes, it is stopping an inexperienced – or ham-fisted – rider from finding out what it's like to have the back end snap out of line, or to loop 190kg of metal. If you reject technology because you're afraid it might fail, presumably you're still running on solid wooden hoops – that new fangled rubber is all too easy to puncture.

Modern electronics are very unlikely to fail, and having had the chance to try KTM's systems on the track, pushing harder than I would on the road, I honestly can't see any reason not to accept it.

John Milbank,
Editor



Bruce's view

It's that exciting time when manufacturers start to reveal what they've been working tirelessly on. Bikes like Ducati's new Monster 1200R, which I was lucky enough to test a few weeks back in Spain (read about it on page 22). It was a great experience and it's got me all excited about what other new machines will be coming our way. If the Monster is anything to go by, 2016 is going to be exceptional.

Bruce Wilson,
Deputy Editor

Motorcycle Sport & Leisure's contributors...



Alan Cathcart

Alan Cathcart has been writing about bikes for more than 30 years, and riding them for even longer. He's regularly given the keys to factory prototypes and being on first name terms with the bosses of bike companies around the world allows him to bag many scoops.



Roland Brown

Has ridden for 37 years and been a bike journalist for more than 30. At *Bike* he ended up as deputy editor before going freelance. An author of 11 books, as a racer he was Bemsee 1300 champion 1984 and raced UK F1, Superstock and Superbike, plus World F1 races.



Chris Moss

Mossy has raced the Isle of Man TT, dispatched in London and ridden everything from CX500s to full-blown GP prototypes. A former chief motorcycle tester for *Motorcycle News*, the 53-year-old admits he's still loving two-wheeled life, and still learning.



Peter Henshaw

Peter knows his stuff – he's a former editor of this very magazine. Now a freelance journalist, he's got the same enthusiasm for anything with wheels that he's had since a child. An all-year-round biker who doesn't own a car, he has more than 40 books to his name.



Nathan Millward

Nathan rode a Honda CT110 Postie bike from Sydney to Australia, without any planning, and with no money or backing. He then rode it across America, and wrote about his incredible adventures in his fantastic books *The Long Ride Home* and *Running Towards The Light*.

MSL December

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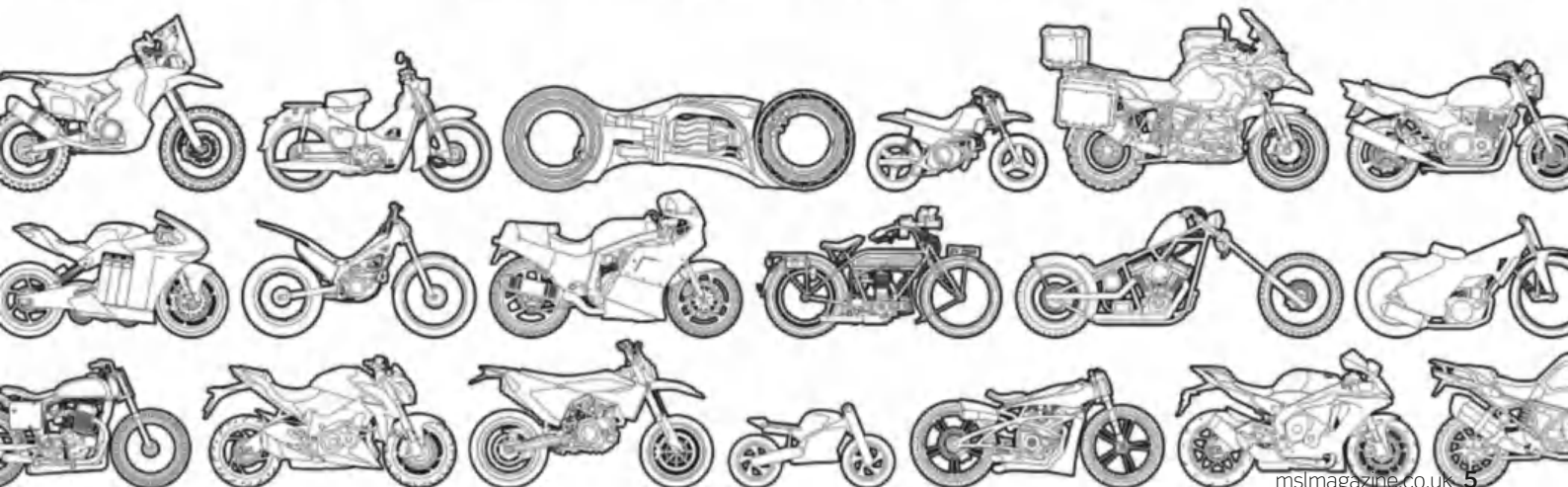


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BY ROYAL APPROVAL

WORDS: Bruce Wilson PHOTOGRAPHY: Joe Dick

One to Ride:

Route: King's Lynn to

Wells-next-the-Sea

Distance: 33.8 miles

Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Kicking things off from the 12th century Hanseatic seaport of King's Lynn, the A149 leads you on a northerly path, traversing the Dersingham Bog national nature reserve. Wild muntjacs and a plethora of bird life can be seen from the road, as it meanders its way through the densely wooded area, which also plays host to Her Majesty's Sandringham Estate – a royal residence since 1862. From there, the ride to the town of Hunstanton is straightforward, consisting of smooth and wide roads.

Known as 'Hunston' to the locals, there's a bike park near the seafront, assuming you want to stop off and explore the

purpose-built seaside resort, which was established in 1846.

The A149 continues to carry you after leaving the town and passing through the more quaint Old Hunstanton, taking on an easterly direction, with the sea to your left. From this point the road becomes much narrower, and the pace drops as you begin to negotiate a number of twists in the road and small villages. If the sea air doesn't help to reaffirm your closeness to the coast, the abundance of wind-carried sand on the roads surely will.

Rich in picturesque views, the architecture lining the route is also fascinating, mostly boasting a traditional Norfolk stone and brick construction. One of the structural highlights is Burnham Mill, located on your right as you cross the River Burn. After Burnham, the road continues to



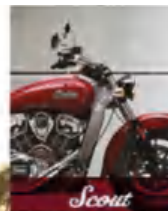
ebb and flow its way along the coastline, factoring in plenty of tight hairpins, before eventually bringing you into the fishing town of Wells-next-the-Sea. Just like Hunstanton, the popular motorcycling venue also facilitates bike parking along the seafront, where you'll find plenty

of amateur crab fishers. Quiet and calming, Wells is a great place to waste away an afternoon, being able to indulge in some quality fish and chips, taking in plenty of fresh air and watching the harbour's armada of small boats bob around on the water.

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NEW

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THE ICON IS REBORN

Triumph unveils the all-new Bonneville family.

The Bonneville is an icon of motorcycling, regarded by some – not least Triumph – as one of the most important bikes ever built. Revealed in a unique press conference at London's The Bike Shed club on Old Street, the next generation of Bonneville is a new family of machines. This, says Triumph, is the future of the Bonneville, not a single futuristic Bonneville.

The British company is celebrating a record year, with 54,000 motorcycles sold internationally last year. It has been working

hard to expand the brand, with bikes featuring in films, on TV and even in video games. As stars like David Beckham, Brad Pitt and Chris Pratt are seen on modern Hinkley classics, the time is right to announce a new chapter in the story of one of biking's most distinctive silhouettes.

It's been a project that's spanned four years, and taken the time of a team double the size of that ever dedicated to a product's development. A new liquid-cooled engine is carried in a 'ground-up' frame and suspension design – the Bonneville family

encompasses five new motorcycles – the 900cc Street Twin, the 1200cc Bonneville T120 and T120 Black, and the 1200cc Thruxton and Thruxton R.

In a year that's seen most manufacturers developing heritage-based bikes, Triumph is keen to stress that the Bonneville is an authentic original. The brief was to create a machine that celebrates its heritage, with modern performance and handling; "More beautiful, more capable, more powerful". It also had to make the custom scene accessible to all owners, regardless of their DIY skills...

Triumph Bonneville Street Twin

The entry-level Bonnie has a 'High Torque' 900cc motor making 59lb-ft at 3200rpm – 18% more than the previous model, with 36% better fuel efficiency. A new upswept brushed stainless steel exhaust system has been tuned to retain the sound of a British Twin, and cleverly hides the Euro4 compliant catalyst beneath the engine. The pipes twist into the cat and back out behind a dummy heat shield, giving the impression of the smooth-flowing plumbing of the original bikes.

A similar piece of engineering genius applies to the small radiator, whose pipework disappears almost invisibly into the top of the head, returning from the bottom of the crankcase.

ABS, Traction Control, a slip-assist clutch that gives a lighter action at the cable-operated lever, LED rear light, immobiliser and a USB charging socket under the key-locked seat are all standard on a bike that's said to be for those 'aspiring to customise'. A relatively modern-looking single analogue speedo incorporates a digital insert, controllable from the bar-mounted switchgear.

As with all the machines in the range, prices (and power) are set to be announced at the end of the year, but it's expected to be in line with the bikes considered to be in direct competition – Ducati's Scrambler, Moto Guzzi's V7 II, Yamaha's XSR700 and Harley-Davidson's 883.



Underneath the bike, you can see the pipes divert to the cat.



TURN OVER
FOR THE REST
OF THE NEW
BONNIE
FAMILY...

Triumph Bonneville T120 and T120 Black

While the engine is physically very similar to the unit in the Street Twin, the 'High Torque' 8-valve parallel-twin in the T120 is 1200cc, and makes 77lb-ft at 3100rpm - 54% up compared to the previous model. As with the 900cc, the 270° firing interval is said to be charismatic, yet with a smooth, linear power delivery through the new six-speed gearbox.

The radiator is a similar, diminutive design to the Street Twin, and while the cat is also hidden away, the exhaust of the 1200 uses a brilliant twin-skin design running to the 'pea-shooter' exhausts.

While this minimises heat discolouration, it also very effectively hides away the 'real' pipeworks' diversion through the catalytic converter.

Both models have a chassis set up for a relaxed and refined ride, a centrestand, ABS, traction control, a ride-by-wire throttle linked to a fuel injection system built into faux-carbs, 'rain' and 'road' riding modes, a slip-assist clutch, LED tail-light, USB charging socket, immobiliser, a new headlight with LED Daytime Running Lights (DRL) and heated grips. Twin analogue clocks have a digital display showing the same info

as that on the Street Twin - gear position, odometer, two trips, service indicator, range to empty, fuel level, average and current mpg, access to the traction control and ABS settings and a clock.

Optional accessories will allow the display to also show tyre pressures and heated grip settings.

Competitors are thought to be Honda's CB1100 and Harley's 1200 Custom and Forty-Eight.



Triumph Bonneville Thruxton and Thruxton R

The Thruxtons share the engine and exhaust setup (but with reverse megas) of the T120, but in a 'Low Inertia' design, utilising a lighter crank, higher compression and unique airbox. Fed by 'authentically-styled' throttle bodies like the T120, it produces 62% more torque than the previous generation of Thruxton - 83lb-ft at 4950rpm; it's also designed to

give more feedback to the rider than the T120 tune. The bikes feature the same modern extras as the T120, with the addition of a 'sport' riding mode, having a more immediate throttle response. Clocks match those fitted to the T120, though with the option to add cruise control on the standard Thruxton.

The Thruxton R gains fully-adjustable upside-down Showa forks, fully adjustable Öhlins twin rear shocks, Brembo monobloc calipers and Pirelli Diablo Rosso Corsa tyres. It also has a stunning polished aluminium top yoke. A performance race kit will be available, reducing weight and increasing power.

Competitors to both bikes are thought to be the BMW R nineT, Yamaha XJR1300, Norton Commando 961 Café Racer and Moto Guzzi V7 Racer.

The new family looks every bit the Bonneville - only closer inspection reveals the level of changes involved. A lot of thought has gone into solutions to not only meet Euro4 regulations, but to produce bikes that really do appear to be ideal for the riders, and roads, of 2016. The Bonny has come a long way in 56 years, and Triumph has proven that it's an iconic machine only part way into an incredible history.



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Inspirational upgrades

Triumph used the conference as a chance to announce a new custom accessory range, with over 470 homologated parts to be available for the Bonneville family.

Each bike also has several 'inspiration kits' – these can be bought as a complete set to be fitted to the bike, or simply serve to give the buyer an idea of what they could do, in much the same way as Moto Guzzi has done with its V7 II (see page 60). A new configurator is expected on the Triumph website shortly.

Our favourites have to be the Street Twin Scrambler – though that high-level exhaust will

be marked 'not for road use' – and the Thruxton Track Racer. If you do opt for a kit, and want it on a new bike, it'll be down to whether your dealer is willing to offer a good price for the bundle – the OE parts will still have to be replaced after you've bought it, though you might find some willing to 'buy back' your originals.

Interestingly, the current Bonneville Scrambler, America and Speed Master will all still be available next year. Triumph refused to comment on whether we can expect a new factory-built Scrambler for 2017...

Steve Sargent, director of motorcycle product strategy

MSL: How did you shape the exhaust note within Euro4 regs?

Steve: The key to getting more tone out of the exhaust is to reduce the amount of mechanical noise coming out of the engine. There's been a lot of effort in making sure the internals of the motor are refined, so you can focus on getting a decent tone. When the noise tests are done, they're measuring all of the noise, so the more you can cut down on the noises you don't want to hear, you more you can amplify the noises you do want to hear. The water jacket helped too of course.

We've gained a lot of knowledge over the years on silencer design, and have internal specialists now that are focussed just on silencer development, whereas before we used to rely on suppliers.

The noise regulations have changed over time, but it's actually harder to pass the regs on higher revving four-cylinder bikes than it is with something with more torque.



MSL: How important are the accessories?

Steve: We've seen the custom scene growing and growing, and it's been frustrating that people modify their bikes with parts from other companies – some of those aren't of the quality we would want to sell. We want customers to have choice, but with the same Triumph quality as their original bike.

The clothing is a business in its own right to us – it's not just for the bikers – which is why we have the casual as well as riding side. It's partly about getting the brand out there, but also for the rider that comes in to buy a bike, and wants to get fully kitted out at the same time.

The black and white branding and new logo is our new corporate identity – it's starting to roll out to dealers already. We have a big dealer conference coming up with 1500 dealers from around the world coming in – it's about getting them fired up to create the atmosphere that goes with what you've seen today.



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BMW's Concept Stunt G 310



Working with European stunt champion Chris Pfeiffer, BMW has unveiled the 300cc single-cylinder bike ahead of the expected launch of a range of entry-level machines. "Stunt riding is a demanding and multi-faceted sport," said Pfeiffer. "Ideally you need a compact, agile bike which is also stable and robust at the same time. You have to achieve the ideal balance between aggressiveness and control."

There are clearly plenty of modifications to the machine for stunt work – not least the twin rear calipers. While we wouldn't expect to see these on BMW's ever-expanding range, the steel-trellis frame and long swingarm will almost certainly be part of the production range.

Most interesting is the reversed cylinder head – inclined towards the rear of the bike and rotated 180 degrees, it helps in creating a

short, nimble wheelbase and allows the exhaust to be tucked upright, between the engine and the rear shock. BMW says that the sound is 'sure to attract attention'; with such a short system on this concept, we'll have to see if the production bikes keep everything so neat and tidy as they battle to comply with Euro4 emission laws. Expect an update next month as we get the latest info from EICMA. www.bmw-motorrad.co.uk

Upgrades for CBR500R

Honda's sports middleweight has received a range of tweaks, including a new look, said to be based on a theme of 'Aggressive Speed Shape'. LED lighting at the front and rear joins a preload-adjustable front-end, larger fuel tank with a hinged filler cap, adjustable levers and a shorter, tuned exhaust.

www.honda.co.uk/motorcycles



No compromise for ZZR1400

While still producing an incredible 207bhp @ 11,000rpm (with ram air), the revised Kawasaki – priced at £11,799 – has been upgraded to comply with Euro4 regulations. The ECU has been reprogrammed, and the evaporative and exhaust systems have been modified, as well as adding a new set of clocks.



The Performance Sport model also gains radial Brembo M50 monobloc calipers, and features an Öhlins shock and Akrapovic silencers.

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Ducati goes dark

While teaser videos promise a black theme for Ducati, the Italians have released a new Diavel Carbon. The 162hp bike is dressed in a new Asphalt Grey colour with a Dark Chrome frame.

The exclusive forged wheels have a bare, machined finish, and the exhaust system is ceramic coated by Formula 1 coating specialists, Zircotec in Oxford. www.ducatiuk.com



New supersport Pirelli

The Diablo Rosso III is the result of the latest tyre technology and racing development in the WSBK treaded classes. It's designed for sporting road riders who may ride the odd track day, but with a tread pattern not only designed to interrupt the forces that erode a tyre – said to allow a much more uniform wear – but is also intended for very safe performance in the wet.

The front has a multi-radius profile for improved handling – higher in the centre and wider at the sides – particularly when dropping into a corner, and is a 100% silica compound for 'outstanding feedback, alongside class-leading stability.'

The rear follows the same profile design, but is a twin compound – the centre 20% of the tyre is built for durability and high-speed stability.

Available from early 2016.

www.pirelli.com



Get closer with Kawasaki

The 2016 ZX-10R is said to be the "closest it is possible for a road-going Ninja to be to the machines that have dominated numerous WSBK races and Super-poles in recent years".

Developed with the Kawasaki Racing Team and the two Superbike champions – Jonathan Rea and Tom Sykes – the new bike is the first from Kawasaki to feature an Inertial Measurement Unit (IMU) to offer advanced traction control, launch control, engine power selection and cornering ABS. The electronic steering damper also has settings optimised for the track and winding roads.

The crankshaft carries 20% less inertia than the previous model, which is said to give increased low to mid-range performance. The Euro4 compliant bike is claimed to make 197bhp without ram air, and 207bhp with it at

13,000rpm. Torque is listed as 84lb-ft @ 11,500rpm.

New WSBK-developed suspension is 'balance free' – a feature first used on a production bike with Honda's 2012 Fireblade – utilising a twin-tube design with a solid piston to prevent the formation of bubbles in the oil by moving the damping outside of the shock and fork bodies. The steering head has been moved closer to the rider to put more weight on the front of the bike for improved corner stability, and the larger 330mm front discs are gripped by radial Brembo M50 monobloc calipers with steel-braided brake lines.

www.kawasaki.co.uk



Neowing concept revealed

Honda showed this three-wheel prototype at the Tokyo motor show. Said to offer the cornering feel and sporty ride of a large motorcycle, it adds the low speed stability of a trike.

The concept machine uses a hybrid power source of a horizontally opposed four-cylinder engine, complemented by electric motors for powerful torque and acceleration.

It'll be interesting to see how much of this reaches a production model, but look at the Vultus if you doubt Honda's ability to surprise. The idea of a three-wheeled Gold Wing is pretty appealing...

www.honda.co.uk/motorcycles



New adventure helmet from Schubert

The E1, due to go on sale in spring 2016 for £499.99-£539.99, is a step forward for adventure riders.

It's designed to combine the ventilation and peak of an off-road lid with the comfort and versatility of a road-biased flip-front. The chin section is easily unlocked and flipped up along with the visor and peak, while the lid includes an 80% tint drop-down sun visor.

Developed in a wind tunnel, the Schubert is claimed to be stable and quiet at high speed without lifting or weaving, and with no influence from the peak. The helmet can be worn with or without the visor or the peak, making this a truly versatile design that can also accommodate your own protective eyewear if preferred.

Schubert says that a complex system of ventilation ducts, along with three independently

controlled openings, allows for optimum air circulation and the prevention of fogging (though a Pin Lock visor insert is included). A large additional chin vent is filtered for dusty riding conditions.

The shell is a fibre glass-reinforced thermosetting matrix, with two sizes covering the internal range of XS to XXXL. The anti-bacterial, breathable lining is removable and washable, with various sizes of cheek pads available. Two antenna are also fitted, ready for the optional Schubert Bluetooth comms system.

Visors will be available in seven different colours, with the sunshield offered in five different specs.

www.tranam.co.uk



Keep your adventure gear dry

Givi's Storm bags are designed for the company's Trekker Outback cases; made from 500D tarpaulin, they're high-frequency welded and seamless, making them 100% waterproof.

Thanks to the roll-top closure system, the bags can be packed down to suit their contents, and feature an outlet valve to remove any trapped air.

The tough kit comes with carry straps, and could be used without the aluminium Trekker Outbacks – whether strapped to the bike or packed into a different case.

Prices range from £48.30 to £52.42. www.givi.co.uk



Get some vintage motorcycle training

The Vintage Motor Cycle Club is now offering the chance to try a classic hand-change machine, including the VMCC's Reed Scott, Triumph SD and Brough Superior SS80.

It's a great opportunity to come to terms with what many newer riders consider very alien controls, decompressors, leather chains and more. Riders are given a full introduction before riding a selection of bikes at the Curborough circuit in Staffordshire. If the oldest bike you've ridden comes from the 60s or 70s, this should be one of your true 'bucket list' entries... the only problem might be resisting buying one.

Days cost £45 for members of the VMCC, or £60 for non-members. For further information please call Joanne on 01283 510547 or email events@vmcc.net.

First with the new bikes

► Like our page at www.facebook.com/MSLmag

to make sure you get to see the latest bikes as soon as we hear about them. Next issue will have the full details of all the new machines being released at the EICMA show in Milan, but if you simply can't wait to get a sneak-peek at the most exciting new metal, join us on Facebook. It's also a great chance to chat with the editorial team, catch up on the latest news, and meet like-minded bikers.

New rights for consumers

► From October 1, 2015, anyone who buys faulty goods will be entitled to a full refund for up to 30 days after purchase – previously retailers only had to provide a 'reasonable time'.

The new rights also cover second-hand goods when bought through a retailer, as well as digital downloads.

The Consumer Rights Act should offer more clarity from now on, and states...

- Goods must be of satisfactory quality, based on what a reasonable person would expect at the price.
- Must be fit for purpose. If the consumer has a particular purpose in mind, he or she should make that clear (so don't try buying an R1 then moaning when you don't finish the Dakar on it).
- Must meet the expectations of the consumer.

Full details are available at bit.ly/2015rights

Budget panniers



► The Spada Expandable Sports Panniers offer from 17 to 22 litres of storage in a water-resistant 600D ripstop nylon outer.

The luggage features a heat-resistant base, heavy duty webbing to secure it, waterproof zips and two external pockets. Carry straps are included, along with waterproof covers for £99.99 www.spadaclothing.co.uk

New Rossi-replica AGV Corsa

AGV has released a replica of Valentino's 'solar' helmet, following his podium finish at Mugello.

The design, by Aldo Drudi, pokes fun at his own problems through the year, inferring that he starts practice with flat batteries, and gradually charges up as race day approaches. Apparently, the solar design reflects the charge he gets from the public; "We made this helmet because the energy of fans penetrates it and pushes me even harder," said Rossi. "I'll try to use every ounce of it."

The chrome finish of the Pista GP lid "mirrors his fans and the packed hillsides around the Mugello track".

The back of the helmet shows different energy levels, starting from bright red for free practice, up to the maximum level of yellow – Rossi's favourite colour. The paw prints are from his cat – Rossano, and his dogs, Cesare and Camilla.

Orders are now being taken for the Corsa replica, which will be available from February for £699. It has a carbon/aramid/glass fibre shell, and weighs just 1350g.

There are four front vents and two at the rear, plus a Pinlock visor insert is included. Available in sizes XS-XXL, with a double-D strap.

www.moto-direct.com



Police chief questions why police 'asked to do the work of ambulance'

Three police forces recently apologised to a biker left in a ditch due to confusion as to which force should attend the call to his crash.

The motorcyclist crashed near Tilbrook, Cambridgeshire, which borders Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire, in September. Despite a 999 call going in shortly after 4pm, emergency services did not arrive until 6.40pm. The biker crashed on the B645 close to the border of the three counties.

Bedfordshire Police said it believed East Midlands Ambulance Service was contacted about the crash. The ambulance service told the BBC, who first reported the incident, that it could not find the record on its logs.

Cambridgeshire Police said it remained unclear as to which county the crash occurred in, adding it was "clear that a better response should have been given".

Chief Inspector Nick Lyall of Bedfordshire Police said the forces "would like to apologise to the man involved", adding they were investigating what went wrong.

Northamptonshire's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Adam Simmonds told the BBC the delay was a "scandal", adding that "someone should answer for that".

In response, Olly Martins, PCC for Bedfordshire, wrote an open letter saying his force had been receiving "flak" for being one of three police forces that failed to attend

the call, but admitted the confusion was "inexcusable", adding, "However, if I was injured and in need of help I would be hoping for an ambulance to arrive rather than a police car, and I am left wondering why Bedfordshire Police ended up doing the work of another emergency service. Was there a crime? No, there was no other vehicle involved. Was there a hazard to other road users? Apparently not."

Mr Martins went on to say: "It's not the first time the police have been called on to do the work of the ambulance service, and I'm sure it won't be the last."

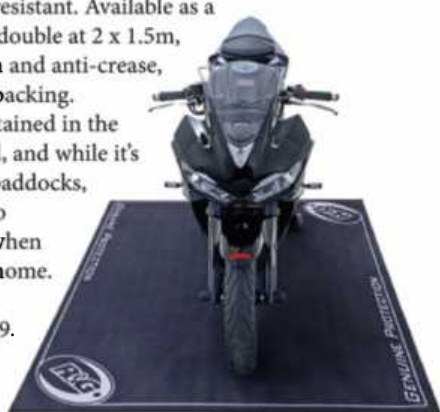
East Midlands Ambulance Service declined to comment on Mr Martin's letter.

Add some luxury your garage

R&G has released a new garage mat range. Made from a polyester pile, the mats are tough and durable, as well as chemical and abrasion resistant. Available as a single at 2 x 0.75m and double at 2 x 1.5m, the mats are anti-stretch and anti-crease, with a non-slip rubber backing.

Spills are quickly contained in the easily washable material, and while it's sure to be a hit in race paddocks, it's also a brilliant way to improve your comfort when working on the bike at home. The single costs £39.99, with the double is £74.99.

www.rg-racing.com



Less sporty touring boot

Sidi now offers the B2 Gore – a less aggressive sports touring boot that retains the Sidi protection of a patented vertebra system, fixed shin plate and full-grain leather upper.

Two shock absorbers give 3mm of impact movement, and a Gore-Tex membrane offers full waterproofing for £224.99.

www.sidiselect.co.uk



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Give the thieves a challenge at least

Facebook biking groups are regularly filled with expletive-laden posts regarding stolen bikes, often supported by CCTV coverage of the theft in progress.

The common thread of the incriminating footage seems to be the ease with which the bikes are removed, ranging from almost wheeling them away to cutting the most meagre of security chains in a few seconds – look at this one as an example: bit.ly/bikegone

In truth, if anyone is committed to stealing your bike you are going to struggle to stop them, but watch and learn from YouTube and you can at least make them have to work for it. A cover makes the bike more difficult to identify as a target. Even a good quality chain, lock and ground anchor will, at best, slow them down, but combined with a highly visible disc lock, will make wheeling the bike away

much more difficult. An alarm will be a deterrent but can be dismissed as yet another false alert on its own, but a tracker will put you in touch immediately the charmers have disturbed the bike, and keep you posted once they've made off without them even being aware.

A combination of all of the above and, short of a truck with crane, your bike may remain in your possession. Just please stop moaning when you haven't done your best first.

RJM

It's an emotive subject – why should anyone feel they can take what someone else has worked so hard for? But you're right – we need as much security as we can get. Had the bike in the video been under a cover, or better still in a shed, maybe it would still be there. A disc lock may well have

helped in this situation, as it seems the thieves pushed the machine with their scooters.

A long time ago I was involved in a feature where we parked a bike, with an alarm, in busy city areas – it was heart-breaking to see that in every case we were able to wheel it into a van, siren blaring, without a blink from

anyone around us. We even dressed up to look dodgy, and often had to violently shake the bike to trigger the alarm. Sadly a disc lock there would have been fairly pointless, as it can be all too easy to get the front wheel off the ground. We can all just do our best... does anyone else have any proven security tips?



A FAILED SYSTEM

Why can't the DVLA operate to the benefit of its users? It took me 10 days to get an MoT. Their computers could not cope with their new system, after probably paying several million pounds for it.

I sold that machine and bought another to recommission after being idle for several years. Eight weeks passed with no sign of a V5. I phoned only to be told that I was required to send in a form available from the post office. I went to the post office, where I was told that this was now obsolete and to phone a given number. I phoned the number and was told that I could expect it in 10 days! I downloaded it eventually with a friend on his computer.

In order to get a new V5 I had to post the green part, and a SORN form because I couldn't get an MoT at the time. I finally got an MoT after waiting an hour and a half for the computer to come online. I tried to get it taxed in order to use it for work and pleasure but was told that I

couldn't without a V5 in my name... How long to get the V5? Six weeks and there it stays!

The DVLA doesn't seem able to meet the needs of its clients before meeting its own. I accept the need for security etc, but with all their technology surely it must be possible to do this online seeing as they already hold all the information needed. Why complicate an already working system? Dare I ask, is it to meet its profit targets?

A B Evans, Rhydaman

We asked the DVSA for a comment and they said: "DVSA have implemented a new MoT testing service which has now been rolled out to all garages. During the rollout there were a number of days when the service did have some problems, and this may be a day when Mr Evans tried to obtain the MoT and we apologise for the inconvenience.

"However, at all times there have been arrangements in place where MoTs could continue to be conducted even

when there were problems with the web service – so the effect on public provision of MoTs should have been minimal. "In implementing the new service, we have an ongoing commitment to continue developing and improving it in line with user feedback – be that from the garage trade or the public who take their vehicle for an MoT – and we welcome any such feedback to this email address: mot.modernisation@vosa.gsi.gov.uk."

A representative of the DVLA said: "DVLA processes applications for a vehicle registration certificate (V5C) as quickly as possible. Where a keeper has applied for a V5C using the V62 'Application for a vehicle registration certificate' they are advised to contact DVLA if the V5C is not received within six weeks."

WHEN IS IT SAFE TO SPEED?

Oh dear John, one could say you are a naughty boy for speeding, but fear not – 80% of the

population sometime today will do exactly that; I did. And at 79 one might say 'he should know better'. I do, that's the point; I very rarely go beyond the speed limit. Of course my knee-down days are behind me in that respect. But, and it's the big but, we all fall into the trap of, speed is addictive, no matter what people say – once they have their hand on the throttle or foot on the accelerator the itch is there. The 'go faster' button has to be pressed.

I presume in your case, John, that a lack of concentration was the cause of your misdemeanour – we've all done that. It's not easy trundling along admiring the scenery and then suddenly looking down at the speedo and seeing the 10mph more than you were thinking you were doing. Naturally we all ease off the throttle, do we not?

As far as your 'classroom' experience will go John, do not worry. You will be among friends who are all wondering the same as you; 'what is going to happen?' Well I have to

inform you that nothing very much happens apart from sitting through a boring four hours of lecture that states the obvious; speed kills in certain circumstances. So what do you do for four hours? In my case I asked questions, I filled in the Q&A forms (not many) and I studied the on-screen scenarios of hazard perception – I'm feeling smug about that as I did pretty good.

I was at the course for doing 80mph on a dual carriageway while overtaking a vehicle in the left hand lane that was doing 70mph. The road ahead was devoid of any other vehicle. I questioned first what speed I should move up to in order to overtake safely, and also why have I no recourse in which to argue my point that this was a safe overtaking speed on a dual carriageway road. No useful answer was forthcoming.

My speeding was in a safe environment and I wanted to overtake quickly and move over into the left hand lane. If we cannot do that then we will end up with a massive train of vehicles all moving at 70mph on dual carriageways and motorways. Which seems rather strange when one thinks about it. It would be interesting if any police can clear up my question.
Bob Marshall, via email

In an ideal world, cameras should – I've been told – only be in areas that have suffered high levels of KSIs (Killed or Seriously Injured). Certainly in my case the camera (a fixed one that I pass regularly!) was at the approach to a nasty junction, and in a built-up area. But you're right – the problem with any camera is that you don't have the opportunity to discuss the manoeuvre with a police officer; it's just black and white. And with speeding pushed as being

as antisocial as drink driving, I don't see that changing. We have to be even more alert, but if that means we have a better chance of seeing the dozy idiots on their phones that no camera catches, then all the better. As for my course – many parts were interesting, but the 'nice guy/tough guy' style of presentation got a bit wearing after a while. I feel I learnt far more from BikeSafe, and had a lot of fun doing it too. But these AA-run courses are a great alternative to prosecution, and they do make you think. Plus I'm relieved not to have any points on my licence; remember that this is education, not a conviction – it doesn't need to be declared to an insurer. One insurance group does ask if you've been on a Speed Awareness Course... my suggestion would be you look elsewhere. John

DO WE NEED FULL CONTROL?

I loved your review of the street bikes last month, but I wanted to ask – why does it matter that you have to 'pull over if you want to alter your ABS or traction control, which isn't ideal'?

I've got a 1290 Super Duke R, and can switch between the riding modes and levels of ABS and TC just by closing the throttle while I ride. I've never felt the need to switch off the TC half way to the coast, but then I haven't felt the need to suddenly pull wheelies. The same goes for the ABS – why would I want to turn it off at all?!

Jack Dexter, via email

To be honest, I've never needed to switch the aids off completely, but some like to be able to fiddle more. Having said that, I know that Neil – the tester – still absolutely adored that machine. John

A WISE USE OF CASH

I was quite surprised to find the Versys 1000 in a test with the S1000XR and the Multistrada, and not get a real pasting, as has happened in other lesser magazine tests!

I've covered 10,000 miles in five months on my GT version and I can assure you that the more the miles are racked up the smoother it gets.

With the £6000 I saved over the similarly equipped rivals you tested, I spent a grand on Maxton GP20 cartridge inserts for the forks and an NC4 rear shock. The handling has been transformed and the remaining £5000 will buy a lot of petrol and nights in fancy European hotels!
Chris Hall, via email

Fantastic! It is a superb machine... for the riding I do, it's a bit big, but having spent a few weeks with one, I totally agree – what a great value bike. John

MEMORIES OF BIKING

The 'Your Bikes' feature in the August issue made me smile. My father, Peter Grimwood, passed away last July from cancer, and while looking through his many photo albums I came across a few pictures of him dated January 1961; standing on the steps of Smith Gore & Co, Westminster, with his Trobike. He worked there while living in London then moved to south east Kent a few years later.

My father had a Triumph I think, but sold it and married



my mother Pamela and raised two sons. He did not ride any more but was quietly supportive of both my brother and I gaining our motorcycle licences in the 80s.

I am now 47 and have so many great experiences of owning bikes from GSXRs to 1200 GSs. I'm sure my father would have liked to have owned a few more bikes but finances and bringing up a family took priority. I miss him a lot and hope one day my three children may take their bike tests and continue to enjoy a great adventure on two wheels.

Steven Grimwood

We're sorry to hear about your dad Steven, but it's great to see that you're continuing the love of biking in your family. John

CLEAN UP OUR ACT

Leon Mannings' column last month about the lack of understanding of who bikers really are is very true. Too often people imagine a grubby, faceless brute that eats kittens. That's not me, or my friends.

But one thing does bother me... they are out there. Not the kitten eaters, but I got talked at by a hardcore biker in the local café the other day whose anti-speed camera rant soon developed into the racist ramblings of a madman. I don't want to be associated with this kind of thing, and I hate the thought that this monotone voiced pillock will get the opportunity to converse with other people, who don't realise that we're not all the same.

Stereotyping is inevitable in every walk of life, and of course every profession, hobby, sport etc. has its bad apples, but if we want to be heard and taken seriously, we need to act responsibly, on and off the road.
Olivia Baxter, Cornwall



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We love to hear from you; send your letters to msleditor@mortons.co.uk, or write to **Letters, Motorcycle Sport & leisure magazine, Mortons Media, Horncastle, Lincs LN9 6JR**. You can also join us at facebook.com/mslmag



More motorcycling! Bring it on, or squeeze it out?

Leon Mannings



I'd guess that most *MSL* readers would see 'More motorcycling!' as positive news, or a clarion call for progress. But it seems equally likely that some of the policy shapers I encounter would hiss such words through clenched teeth, and in thinly veiled fury or contempt if they were open about their blinkered views. They never are of course, as an image of fairness and impartiality needs to be maintained; but sometimes the truth emerges about an underlying desire some have to constrain motorcycling even more.

Although motorcycling is a cheaper, more efficient, greener and less stressful way to move people and goods in many situations, it is often harder than it should be to get those benefits recognised as such. Nevertheless, the benefits of more motorcycling generally, and especially instead of car or van use are being considered increasingly seriously in crucial parts of the UK – where £billions are being allocated to deliver much needed regeneration and growth. One result is that consideration of 'new' options for real progress – like more use of motorbikes – has certainly increased in the Midlands, North of England and in Wales.

Ironically, the biggest trigger for better recognition of biking as a vital part of solutions rather than problems in those regions was a series of 'visionary' plans to improve transport that made no mention of motorcycling at all. Concerns about that were successfully raised by MAG and the visionary plans now recognise a positive role for motorcycling in delivering real progress, in and between key cities from the North West to North East. Bold ideas like the Northern Powerhouse and a 'Devolution Revolution' may be rightly viewed with a degree of scepticism, but central government is putting big money where its mouth is, and £billions are to be shipped from the treasury into local government coffers. All of which means that there are bigger pots of cash at local level to fund moves that can enable more people and goods to be transported by motorbikes, scooters or mopeds.

Conversely, and absurdly in my view, the chances of more motorcycling bringing big benefits to the South East will plummet if a dangerous new trend in 'improvements' to major roads across Greater London continues. Quite simply, the great advantage that motorbikes have over cars or vans of being able to filter past jammed traffic is quite literally being squeezed out of an ever rising number of key roads in the capital. Up until now, the official reasons for a billion pound programme of 'improvements' to be spread across London have all been focused on positive objectives – namely to enhance safety and convenience for cyclists.

Support for more motorcycling is growing in many UK cities, but moves to eliminate the benefits of biking from the biggest urban area of all have just been revealed...

However, the existence of what I see as a crazily negative objective, namely to eliminate the benefits of motorbikes being able to filter through jammed traffic, has just emerged in the public domain, along with an explanation of how it will be achieved.

This disturbing revelation was made by a senior Transport for London (TfL) officer who was being questioned during a meeting of the Greater London Assembly's (GLA) transport committee. I was invited to contribute input alongside others as the whole session was devoted to a review of TfL's policy responses to motorcycling in the capital. As you can see if you go to the GLA website and watch a webcast of the transport committee meeting on October 15, (<http://is.gd/LTyYkX>) the mechanism to stop motorcycles filtering is briefly mentioned and brutally simple.

As I had tried to prove for the last year, it was finally confirmed that the width of 'general traffic' lanes is being narrowed to 3m in most locations for new cycle only lanes – and bikers will be forced to share that compressed space with cars, vans and trucks. This is already making it physically impossible for a motorbike to pass stationary or slow moving traffic – or making it far more dangerous to filter in the middle of narrowed roads between traffic that is more snarled up than ever.

In practice, a powerful handful of unelected officers in the capital and some London Boroughs (who are also narrowing lanes for motorcyclists) have decided that motorcycles should be prevented from filtering on the public roads that they are legally bound to maintain and improve for all.

Right now the benefits of motorcycling as a congestion-busting mode are being systematically and deliberately squeezed out of the capital. This seems more absurd than ever in a city that has the worst congestion in Europe – and in a supposedly United Kingdom in which a rising number of major cities are seeing the need to make the most of what motorcycling has to offer. On balance I'd guess that more motorcycling is increasingly likely in urban areas outside London and I'd hope that more bikers and the motorcycle industry will do what they can to support progress throughout the whole of the UK.

Who is Mannings?

Leon is *MSL*'s political man. Working within the corridors of power Dr Mannings is consistently on the inside picking up the big political changes and whispers that threaten to change the motorcycle world we all inhabit. Always on the side of the biker, Leon is a hard-edged, educated campaigner for two-wheeled rights and has been hugely influential where it really matters

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WORDS: **Bruce Wilson** PHOTOGRAPHY: **Milagro**





This Ducati's not all about the power figures, but it's hard to simply skim over the R's considerable output of 160bhp. Producing 25bhp more than the Monster 1200 and 15bhp more than the S-spec version, the Italian firm's latest naked is something of a heavyweight among street bikes.

Despite sharing the same Testastretta L-twin engine as its 1200 siblings, an increased compression ratio, new airbox and bigger throttle bodies (56mm instead of 50mm) – as used on Ducati's sportsbikes – squeezes even more from the 1198cc motor. It also meets Euro 4 legislation (the other two 1200s are Euro 3), requiring several changes to internal components, including the fitment of new, quieter pistons, and a completely remodelled silencer system. Although Ducati was clearly very proud of its design, during the model's global launch in Spain at the Ascari race circuit, there was no hiding the pain behind the system's necessary additional bulk and weight.

From the outset of the R's development, which was planned in tandem with the other two Monster 1200s, a target dry weight of 180kg had been established and nothing was going to get in the way of the engineers reaching that goal. Utilising the same forged, three-spoke wheels as featured on the flagship Panigale 1299 saved 500g of unsprung weight,

while a complete redesign of the sub-frame saved more than a kilogram. Slimmer and sharper in its angle, the subframe, which mounts directly to the back of the engine and aids compactness, has a greater focus on solo riding.

It's all about the rider, although a removable seat cowl and detachable pillion pegs – now mounted directly to the subframe – still render the R a motorcycle fit for two.

More weight was saved with new rider footpegs, which simultaneously opened the bike up to higher angles of lean; another key goal for the R. With a more track-capable and sporting focus, improved ground clearance was essential for the more powerful and 2kg lighter Monster.

The most logical method to achieve that aim was to increase the fork and shock lengths by 15mm, creating a maximum 50 degrees of lean angle. As is the case with the 1200S, the 1200R is equipped with fully adjustable Öhlins suspension, albeit the R's damping is firmer. Another addition to the bike is the Öhlins steering damper, which sits just rear of the top yoke and was considered to be an essential item in terms of both performance and style.

TUNING THE SUSPENSION

The look was crucial, with a lot of effort going into a sleeker and more race-orientated silhouette – the top-down view of the seat unit is more reminiscent of the 999 superbike of old. Sporty graphics, carbon fibre and

even the hero-blobless footpegs suggest this bike is different.

The tech is the same as the other Monsters, offering Urban, Touring and Sport riding modes. My bike was set to the latter as I exited the pit lane, the front wheel casually lifting under a handful of throttle. The run to the first corner is only short, but it was enough to instantly feel the additional oomph of the R. The farther I rode, the more I got to gauge its crisp fuelling and relentless drive, which far surpassed the other bikes; still breathing freely well above 7000rpm.

Driving out of corners, the Monster's Thin Film Transistor (TFT) dash glowed progressively redder as the engine neared its peak output of 9250rpm, following which you've still got another 1000 revs to play with,



Öhlins forks are fully adjustable.

Specifications

DUCATI MONSTER 1200R

Engine: 1198cc, liquid-cooled, L-twin

Peak power: 160bhp (117kW) @ 9250rpm

Peak torque: 97lb-ft (131Nm) @ 7750rpm

Transmission: 6-speed

Frame type: Tubular steel trellis-type

Wheels: (F) 120/70/17; (R) 200/55/17

Suspension: (F) Fully adjustable, 48mm Ohlins; (R) Progressive linkage with fully adjustable Ohlins monoshock

Wheelbase: 1509mm

Seat height: 830mm

Kerb weight: 207kg

Fuel capacity: 17.5 litres

Price: £15,250 (Ducati Red) / £15,450 (Thrilling Black)

Contact: www.ducatiuk.com



prompting me to step through into the next gear and indulge in more speed. While it's not possible to criticise the smooth gear changing process itself, most journalists felt the bike should have come fitted with a quickshifter as standard.

On a more positive note, the addition of a gear position indicator helped massively on the first few track sessions, especially when trying to pick the right gear for the circuit's multitude of bends. The straights were far easier, and the perfect chance to absorb the beauty of the reworked motor, which just seemed to keep pulling throughout the revs. In the

same respect as the 1199 did to the 1198 it superseded, the R's engine felt more revvy than its predecessors and proved much more manageable, too. Drivability out of slower corners was still plentiful, but rolling on and off the throttle in bends didn't encourage the typical jerky sensation you'd expect from a big twin.

Despite having been to Ascari previously, reacquainting myself with the track did take a few sessions and it wasn't until the third or fourth that I really began to taste the potential of the Monster. In my first few outings

Although the geometry remains the same, saved weight allows the Monster to change direction faster.

I'd worried about how unstable the Monster seemed, being prone to wallowing while on the brakes or accelerating hard out of corners. It also wasn't a fan of quick changes to direction or running the bumpy kerbs when straightlining the chicanes. A word with Ducati's development rider Allesandro Badovini soon changed things. Having asked for more compression on the front and rear of the bike, he went further, speeding up the rebound at both ends and jacking up the rear shock to help the bike turn faster. Back on track, the changes were immediately noticeable.

Ascari's third and fourth corners are very fast and it's essential that you flow from one apex to the next, before powering off down a mini straight. Excessive wallowing had made this challenge hard work previously, with the bike feeling difficult to turn and the front-end vague. With Allesandro's changes, that was no longer the case. In fact, the whole track felt significantly better to ride, giving me more confidence when pitching in, apexing and driving out of corners. The stability of the bike improved dramatically, both through the bends



Paolo Quattrino Ducati marketing and product manager

To get a more thorough appreciation of the Monster 1200R and its design focus, we caught up with Paolo Quattrino, asking him...

MSL: Why did you decide to give the Monster more power?

Paolo Quattrino: The 'R' concept was determined at the same time as the development of the Monster 1200 and 1200S. While building a versatile and comfortable bike for the road, we also wanted to produce a more focused bike that handled better and had a much more sporting attitude. The naked sector is very big and sales have continued to grow in the segment over recent years. Ducati wanted to increase its grasp in the marketplace and the 'R' has allowed us to enter into the very select super-naked category. We are certain that its arrival will bolster our naked bike sales.

MSL: How well do you expect the 1200R to sell?

PQ: Of course, every market is different, but we expect the Monster 1200R to achieve around 15% of sales within the Monster family on a global front. That 15% is hoped to be additional to the volume of sales the family currently achieves, having appealed to customers who might not have looked to Ducati previously. At present, the Monster 851 is our best-seller in the range, making up around 65% of the sales. The Monster 1200 and 1200S pretty much make up the remaining 35%.



TFT dash now shows your gear choice.

and on the straights, and the feel of what was going on beneath me also stepped up. Grip was always plentiful, no matter how aggressive I got with the throttle, and the agility of the Monster impressed me. In equipping the bike with the Panigale's wheels, Ducati had also increased the Monster's rear tyre radius from 190 to a 200-profile. The rear is quite simply massive, but it never seemed to impede the riding experience. The bike's fitted with Pirelli Supercorsas, carefully crafted to complement both turning speeds and adhesion levels. Getting from vertical to full lean, and being hard on the gas, was an effortless task.

Other parts borrowed from the Panigale include the dual 330mm

front discs and Brembo M50 monobloc calipers. Ascari has some very hard braking zones and the R's front anchors never failed to amaze me with their performance and feel. Selecting Sport riding mode automatically reduces the ABS to its lowest setting; level one of three. I could have switched the system off entirely, but the rider aid proved so unobtrusive that I just left it on and felt assured by its presence; especially so in the earlier sessions when we had a good few drops of rain. On a few occasions, hard application of the brakes did cause the system to kick-in, to which I simply released and reapplied pressure on the lever.

One problem that wasn't so easy to get rid of was ground clearance. Despite being massively more generous than its siblings, it still proved quite easy to deck out the sidestand, footpegs and exhaust valve on the R. Moving my weight off the bike into corners did help, but it wasn't a magic fix – several bikes sustained bent gear selectors and brake pedals. The increase in the

Closest Rival:

APRILIA TUONO 1100 FACTORY - £14,635

Born on the racetrack and tweaked for the roads, Aprilia's Tuono Factory offers a raw and exhilarating experience. It's powered by a ballistic V4 motor, which produces 175bhp and more torque than most can handle; even with its plethora of rider aids engaged.

Wheelie control, power modes and eight adjustable levels of traction control reiterate that this bike's no technophobe, although accessing and adjusting some of the systems can be hard work – illustrated on a dot-matrix-style dash that's reminiscent of a 1990s Nokia phone.

The ride is very firm and focused, which can make it a bit skittish on bumpy back roads, but it's heavenly when you get to smooth and fast twisties, changing direction quickly and effortlessly. A great bike.



suspension unit length had undoubtedly proven beneficial, and it's unlikely that most people would sustain such problems when riding the bike on public roads, but on track it felt as though the potential was hindered on a far too regular basis.

Ultimately, if someone wanted an out-and-out sportsbike, they'd buy themselves a Panigale. The Monster 1200R is not that focused a



Forged wheels have saved the Ducati 500 grams.



Test Ride

SUSPENSION

To improve ground clearance, the front and rear Öhlins suspension units are now 15mm taller than those fitted to the 1200(S). The make-up of the forks and shock have also been reworked to improve damping characteristics.

WHEELS

The three-spoke forged wheels are borrowed from the Panigale 1299 sportsbike. They save a total of 500g in unsprung weight and offer a broader 200-profile rear tyre.

ENGINE

Producing 160bhp, the Monster's motor has been changed significantly to improve its output, being fitted with new pistons, throttle bodies and a different airbox. The compression ratio and silencer have also been reworked.

SUBFRAME

Weighing 500g less than the one fitted to the 1200 and 1200S, the Monster 1200R's all-new subframe has been crafted to give the model a sportier look. It also now has detachable pillion pegs.

COLOURS AND GRAPHICS

Ducati's new Monster will be available in either Ducati Red or Thrilling Black. Both colourways have been designed to suggest a prestigious and sporting nature, with a particular focus on the letter 'R'.



motorcycle, which is actually one of its key advantages. In producing the R, Ducati has essentially increased the versatility of the Monster, but it's still very much a street bike.

Although we didn't get a chance to try it out on the roads, there's not a part of me that would question its competence as an everyday motorcycle, especially as it has retained the same handlebar and seat height as found on the tried and tested standard and S-model Monsters. The fact it can now earnestly tackle racetracks, too, is nothing but a huge bonus and will undoubtedly influence sales of the model when it reaches dealerships in January 2016. That is supposing you can get over the £15k-plus price tag.

As naked bikes go, the R is very expensive with the 'Ducati Red' version £15,250 – over £4000 more expensive than the base model 1200. The model's also available in 'Thrilling Black', but that will set you back £15,450. You'd best get saving.

The fact it can now earnestly tackle racetracks, too, is nothing but a huge bonus.

Creating a Monster - Gianandrea Fabbro



Gianandrea was the designer charged with sculpting the new Monster 1200R, for which the challenge was to keep the Monster representative of its family, while giving it a more aggressive and focused look. He explained...

"Design has and always will be a major factor for Ducati, especially so on naked models such as the Monster. Over the years, and in many different formats, the Monster brand has grown to an iconic status. The motorcycles within its family are instantly recognisable and that is something we have worked hard to retain with every new version we've produced.

"When designing the new Monster 1200 and 1200S, we worked with two major reference lines; one which followed the angle of the forks

and another which arched forward from the rear swinging-arm, up and over the bars. We retained these guides on the 1200R, but introduced a third and crucial design line to sharpen up the rear subframe. The angle was much sharper and more focused, like on a sports machine. A new subframe was necessary and the number plate mount needed to be moved from the 1200S's swinging-arm fixing point and repositioned immediately after the seat unit – as is the case on most sportsbikes.

"The detachable pillion pegs were another necessary styling cue, as were the new rider pegs. The top-down silhouette of the bike is much sleeker, too, resembling the outline of a woman's body. New graphics were very important to help identify the 'R' without any mistake. They show off its new lines beautifully and the coloured stitching used on the saddle gives an assured air of quality."

Making things work

Kevin Cameron



In critical applications a gear will fail if its tooth profiles deviate from the intended shape by half a thousandth of an inch. A gear can fail if the radius at the tooth root, which is never touched by the teeth of the meshing gear, is either too small or bears tool marks.

Service books for large aircraft propellers contained pages of photographs, showing the various kinds of nicks and scratches that service operation produces. The first decision is whether the scratched or nicked prop blade can be reused at all. If it can, there is a specific procedure for each defect type.

Why all this care? These are parts under very high cyclic stress that is repeated millions of times – ideal conditions for any discontinuity to be turned into a crack.

Before the interwar period, between 1920 and 1939, machines tended to operate at much lower speeds, carrying moderate stresses. As machines sped up, fatigue failure became a barrier to reliability. At the Bristol Aeroplane Company, Roy Fedden sought to make a business from what had, during the Kaiser War, been a lash-up emergency – aircraft engines.

Air commanders were pleased if engines just started and ran, but future airline managers would want to know difficult things like capital, fuel, and repair costs per mile, and the number of hours before overhaul. Aircraft engines had to be light enough to fly, but heavy enough to survive, which meant each part had to be minutely studied to provide essential strength in a shape free of surface defects, notches, sharp edges, or other invitations to cracking.

A similar process was going on at the TT races – a battle against rapidly accumulating fatigue as engine rpm rose from 2000 in 1920 to 5000 by 1930, and upward. Valve springs broke and one aero engine builder sought to overcome frequent fatigue failure by sheer statistics – each valve was held against its cam lobe by a ring of 12 springs, any six of which were able to keep the engine firing. Fedden found a certain steel producer in Sweden able to make reliable valve spring material, but this was not satisfactory – he wanted to raise the level of materials technology in Britain so that in the event of another war, his engines would not depend on distant suppliers.

Motorcycle crankshafts began as a pair of cast iron flywheels, each shaped to act as counterweights, joined by a short, slender crankpin, each supported by its own taper-and-nut mainshaft. By 1925, the softness of the cast iron was allowing mainshafts and crankpins to work loose at racing speed. Steel flywheels took the place of iron, and stronger alloy steels (developed

As engine speeds rose, the need for ever more perfect materials and finishes became essential...

in many cases for aero engine use) took the place of classic carbon steels. Parts as apparently simple as threaded fasteners came under close scrutiny when they repeatedly failed from high cycle fatigue. What could be worse than threads when it comes to providing notches from which cracks can propagate?

At first it was hoped that forming critical threads by grinding rather than cutting would improve performance. A technology of shaping grinding wheels to desired precise contours had made possible great improvement in the fatigue strength of gears.

Alas, though ground-thread fasteners were somewhat better than cut, they still broke when called upon to carry millions of fatigue cycles. A huge step forward was to smoothly forge the threads with hardened contoured rollers. All these small details accumulated one by one, against indifference from a manufacturing base accustomed to supplying the Age of Steam. The same was occurring in the US, where steelmakers regarded alloying as something of interest only to tweedy university metallurgists and pantywaists (or possibly Frenchmen).

As the aviation business grew, so did knowledge of materials and design-against-fatigue. Fedden's aero engine operation had to train its own engineers and technicians, and when their value became known to competitors, many a sharp lad who'd started out clearing chips off of lathes and mills received attractive offers of employment elsewhere. One of the suppliers starting up at this time was High Duty Alloys, whose Hiduminium series of aluminium alloys became essential to producers of high strength forgings. RR58, developed in cooperation with Rolls-Royce in 1939, has long been a piston material used by Ducati. The founder of High Duty Alloys, Wallace Devereux, had been a regular competitor at Brooklands, that great melting-pot of technologies and technologists.

The fast-increasing menu of materials and processes, many developed by Britain's aircraft industry, provided solutions for competitors in the TT races and at Brooklands, where engine and driveline parts encountered stresses similar to those in aviation.

At present, the western nations seem to be 'outgrowing' technology, sending it off to be conducted in faraway places. I'm far from sure that this is progress.

Who is Cameron?

Kevin is one of the most widely-respected technical gurus on the planet. Author of some of the most iconic and landmark books in motorcycle publishing, the American brings the innermost workings of what goes on in an engine to the fore in an easy-to-access way. Simply put, Cameron is a genius of all things metal that are fixed to two wheels

KTM 1290 Super Duke GT prototype

MORE THAN 'JUST' A SPORTS TOURER

Alan Cathcart exclusively rides the incredible new Super Duke GT prototype from KTM. WORDS **Alan Cathcart** PHOTOGRAPHY **Heiko Mandl**

KTM p e den Stefan P e e couldn't have been clearer when he spoke to me back in 2006. "When we're discussing new projects of all we a way think what the DNA of KTM and does match with that model? I don't think a sports tourer in the classic way matches 100% with KTM brand identity

Our customers expect something potentially different kinds of bikes could work on our [V-twin] platform, only made the KTM way not like other manufacturers do

A decade later KTM has become Europe's largest motorcycle manufacturer by broadening its range of singles produced in India by 30% and 47.96% has held Bajaj Auto and by expanding the range of larger-capacity singles and V-twins built in

its Mattighofen factory in Austria. They'll be joined in 2016 by the first ever KTM V-twin with our new projects the new 1290 Super Duke GT – which I was privileged to be the first person outside the company to test the prototype for me.

This was due to be launched at the EICMA Milan Show midway through November, with deliveries beginning in April next year





In developing this new product, closely based on the 1290 Super Duke R – with which the company rightly claims to have redefined the term streetfighter – KTM paid close attention to feedback from its test riders and customers, as Sebastian Sekira, the Austrian company's youthful vice president of street development explains: "We started work on this bike in the summer of 2013, and it came about almost accidentally when we were making the last test rides with the normal 1290 Super Duke R just before it was launched.

"These showed us the versatility of the bike, because we realised that besides making really fast laps on the race track on it, you can go riding with friends over a weekend, or even, if you like, make a holiday trip with it. So based on our experience with the prototype Super Duke R, the idea was born of making a GT version with a frame-mounted fairing, some space for luggage, a bit more tank capacity and even a little more performance. [KTM designer] Gerald Kiska made a brilliant sketch for such a bike, and I think when our board of management saw the sketch, they decided immediately to produce it.

"Then, later on, we saw our customers doing the same with their 1290 Super Dukes, which confirmed we were doing the right thing."

So, Stefan Pierer's wish for a bike that epitomises touring the KTM way is about to be satisfied...



MORE THAN JUST A FAIRING

To create the GT, Sekira's R&D team have taken the Super Duke R's tubular steel trellis frame, and while retaining the geometry, they have strengthened it to accommodate a frame-mounted upper fairing that delivers greater protection via an eight-position, tool-free, adjustable windscreen with a 140mm range. This complements a new one-piece handlebar with heated grips as standard, whose flatter shape delivers a more upright, relaxed riding position than on the Super Duke R.

There's also a longer, stronger, new rear subframe to give the passenger extra room via lower footrests and a plusher seat, as well as to facilitate fitting specially-designed hard panniers alongside the integrated luggage rack that'll come as standard. The 2-1 exhaust's silencer is also mounted lower to make room for

ABOVE LEFT: A flap in the exhaust helps the bike meet Euro 4 noise requirements while boosting mid-range performance.

BELOW LEFT: The 1301cc engine is revised, and promises more power than the Super Duke R.

BELOW: Original-style dash will be replaced with full TFT display, as this unit on the prototype 690.

this, and the fuel tank has been enlarged from the Super Duke's 18 litres to 24 litres.

"The whole integrated packaging is new, and I think the aerodynamic protection is very good for the size of the fairing and screen," says Sekira.

"We wanted to still have a sportbike with not such a big screen, and you can access the height adjustment really easily."

It gives excellent protection at 90mph cruising speeds, while the GT will come with a new headlight featuring integrated LED running lights, self-cancelling indicators and the three-stage lean-angle-specific LED cornering lights first fitted to the 1290 Super Adventure. These are linked to the ECU's lean angle sensor, and increase in intensity as you lean the bike over, directing light into the apex of a turn.

Also borrowed from the 1290 Super Adventure is WP's semi-active suspension with four different riding modes – Soft, Street, Sport and Touring – obtained via a Suspension





Control Unit that adapts the damping rates of WP's 48mm upside-down fork and rear monoshock to best suit the properties of the road surface, as well as the rider's style. With semi-active suspension customers will be able to choose via the dash the appropriate rear pre-load adjustment – whether rider-only with or without luggage, or two people with or without bags.

Conversely, the Brembo brake package and cast aluminium wheels are sourced from the Super Duke R, with twin radially-mounted, four-piston monoblock calipers gripping 320mm front discs with a large 240mm rear, incorporating switchable Bosch ABS with four modes – Street, Sport, Rain and Supermoto. On a tourer? “No – it's a GT bike,” says Sebastian Sekira. “This is made for touring the KTM way!”

That means class-leading performance from a motorcycle that's equally at home on a track or, in my case, riding through the Upper Austrian countryside around the KTM factory. By remapping the 1301cc 75° V-twin motor's Keihin ECU to deliver a smoother, stronger pickup from low revs, KTM's

ABOVE RIGHT: Alan speaks with Sebastian Sekira, vice president of street development.



engineers have produced improved performance via an exhaust system meeting the forthcoming Euro 4 noise and emissions requirements. This has been achieved while at the same time delivering added performance over and above the 180bhp at 8870rpm delivered by the 1290 Super Duke R. KTM has delivered a noticeable hit of extra midrange performance all the way to the 10,200rpm limiter, at which point the ride-by-wire digital throttle simply stops building revs. You can't help but notice how little vibration there is at any speed, and switching on the stock cruise control for 80mph along a four-lane highway delivers effortless mile-eating free of any tinges. Yet at the top end the GT has a really meaty power delivery, pulling strongly from as low as 4000rpm in Sport riding mode, which means you don't have to work the six-speed gearbox's sweet-action stock quick-shifter very hard to get

muscular drive through the V-twin motor's mighty midrange. I could hold fourth gear for miles carving corners through the countryside, followed by straight-line squirts to the next bend, making the GT live up to its name as a grand tourer with sporting pretensions constantly available at the twist of a wrist.

You can knock it down a gear or even two to get added zest, but the motor has such huge reserves of torque that even if Sekira declined to reveal exact stats at this stage of the bike's development, it's evident that KTM has extracted extra performance over and above the Super Duke R's already impressive numbers, while at the same time making the bike easier to ride, with reduced vibration, AND meeting the tougher emission and noise targets.

“Three years ago we did not believe that we could ever gain even the same engine performance while meeting Euro 4 targets,” says Sekira.

“But eventually we realised that not only is this indeed possible, but that we can have extra peak power AND extra midrange power... and thanks also to the better combustion of the engine, you can feel it has extra smoothness.

“The Super Duke R is already very smooth for a powerful big Vee engine, but this GT version is even smoother.

“I don't want to go into too much detail at this stage so long before production begins, but we have more performance from the GT engine than from the Super Duke R – and I'm not talking about just one or two horsepower, it's quite a bit more than that!”



Specification

KTM 1290 SUPER DUKE GT (PROTOTYPE)

Price: TBC

Engine: 1301cc water-cooled dohc 75° V-twin with four valves per cylinder and chain camshaft drive

Power: Over 180bhp (134kW)

Torque: TBC

Kerb weight: TBC

Seat height: 835mm

Fuel capacity: 24 litres

Contact: www.ktm.com

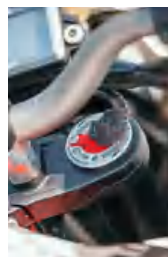
MORE POWERFUL THAN THE BEAST

With such serious power and acceleration on tap, don't think the KTM is an abrupt handful exiting a turn off a closed throttle, because Sekira's engineers have done a great job of taking the edge off the GT's voracious jump to terminal velocity, without excessively neutering the initial launch. Even the Sport mode's throttle response is smooth while offering up more power at smaller openings than Street mode, which requires just a little bit more throttle for the same yield of power until around one-third opening, where both modes then offer similar performance. Rain mode smooths out throttle response even more while capping peak power to 100bhp, though I only tried this once thanks to the sunny weather for my ride.

Absent from the prototype test bike was the Motorcycle Stability Control programme that combines lean-angle specific traction control with the Bosch cornering ABS, but this will be included as standard when the GT reaches production, as will the Pirelli Angel GT rubber fitted to the test bike, delivering a good mix between grip and high mileage.

So the bike generally considered to be the class act in the street-fighter sector has now been overtaken in

performance by its forthcoming sport tourer sibling – complete with more power, more torque, and a wider spread of each, as well as more accessibility low down. I can't wait to be let loose on the finished product, preferably for an extended ride through mountain passes where the new KTM's agile handling, coupled with its meaty torque would really shine. The more upright riding stance with plenty of legroom for taller riders, coupled with the wider, flatter taper-section aluminium handlebar makes the GT a brilliant bike to hustle from side to side through hairpin bends – but not at the



ABOVE: The GT is fitted with KTM's semi-active electronic suspension.



expense of stability through flat-out fourth gear sweeping turns. Clutch engagement is smooth and light with no snatchiness, and the ramp-type slipper clutch smooths out downshifts and uses engine torque to increase clutch plate pressure under power.

The GT's new bigger and plusher seat is really comfortable, and I could well imagine covering serious distance on it – it isn't too narrow or slanted, either. But the old-style dash fitted to the prototype GT I was riding seemed seriously outdated compared to the good-looking light-sensitive TFT unit prototype 690 Duke single I'd been riding earlier that day (see last month's *MSL*). This will be fitted to the GT when it reaches production, and is very easy to read even in bright sunlight, as well as ultra-effective in darkness. KTM's previous stock digital dash – as used on everything from its Indian-made 125 Duke single right up to many of its maxi-twin models – already set the industry standard for function and clarity, and now this upgrade promises a similar level of excellence as it's adopted across the company's entire range of models.

Stefan Pierer's men have delivered their boss what he wanted – a machine that offers his customers the chance to go touring the KTM way!

“You kind of know when it’s going to break away, and nine times out of ten you can catch it.”

Development rider Jeremy McWilliams explains what goes in to creating one of the world’s most powerful naked bikes...

WORDS: John M Ibank

PHOTOGRAPHY: KTM & Mortons Archive

Jeremy McWilliams – a road racer from Belfast – until Scott Redding won at the 2008 125 British Grand Prix, he was the only rider from the British Isles to win a race – or pole – in a motorcycle Grand Prix class in the 2000s.

He’s raced in the North West 200, 500 and 250cc GP and in MotoGP. He’s a hugely influential development rider for KTM, and a very nice bloke. Oh, and he had a supporting role in Jonathan Glazer’s 2014 movie *Under The Skin*, with Scarlet Johansson.

We spoke exclusively to him at a recent KTM owner’s track day...

MSL: How does developing a road bike compare with riding a MotoGP race machine?

Jeremy McWilliams: There’s a huge gulf between road and race bike, but everything that a manufacturer learns through racing helps them develop new technologies for road bikes – you’ll see that in the models to come – KTM are now using quickshifters, blipper systems... in the future the new range will have those options.

But first thing first, a bike has to work – everywhere under any conditions with any level of rider. Road development is all about developing a bike around every kind of user. Coming from my background in racing to road bike development is quite a different thing, but I’ve always had a road bike so I don’t just get on one and go at a million miles an hour – I ride like a sensible road user. That’s where I was able to help with the development of the 1290 Super Duke R.

Even before that, we were working on the suspension for the RC8 R and later the European Junior Cup specification of the 2012 690 Duke. We turned that into a really capable circuit bike which would later be the basis for the current 690 Duke R. There are lots of areas I’ve been involved in – more recently the 1290R and now the new GT.





Comfort was as important as track performance to McWilliams in developing the Super Duke R.

MSL: During development of the 1290 Super Duke R, I understand the engineers were surprised when a MotoGP racer told them the bike needed to have a less sporty riding position.

JM: I think they expected me to come in and go 'make it as racy as possible'. But that's not what I want to be sitting on for the road – I want to be sitting on something that's comfortable, that I'm not all squashed up on. That I can ride for miles without getting backache, or neck ache, or cramp in my legs.

That's where the Super Duke started, and probably why they called me back to do it, as I was pretty adamant I didn't like the seating position when I first got on the bike. They then kind of said. 'Okay, you think you're that smart, why don't you have a go at changing everything on it to be the way you like it... there's your R&D team, off you go, send us the finished product.' What they really meant was 'Keep sending it back and we'll check if we like what you're doing'. That's really how the development programme went on.

Development is every bit as – or more – detailed as working with a race team. You've got gearbox engineers to engine technicians to Bosch electronics... I was involved in that for well over a year... you're really working at the same kind of intensity as you would during a race test week. But of course we're testing behind closed doors at particular development circuits, and then taking it on the road – making sure that what we worked out with the bike on circuits and rough roads and wet surfaces is right. We were testing that Super Duke for long periods of time at 295kph [183mph] at these facilities, but that has to transpire to a normal working road bike that anyone can get on and ride.

MSL: Do you have to test up to a point where it goes wrong?

JM: I also worked on the traction control system of the Adventure with the same R&D team and Bosch. We went off to a facility in Japan where we kind of tested that until basically we crashed it.

We have a team with us, and my job there was to show at what point we could get breakaway.

I'm totally at ease with that – that's really what we would have been doing when I was racing. You kind of know when it's going to break away, and nine times out of ten you can catch it.

We take a whole team of different level test riders... we had one or two that basically tested it beyond the lean angle that a tyre can physically keep grip at, so we had some fun doing that. Nobody was hurt though – it's a controlled environment.

It's very detailed, down to the tyre profile, lean angle sensor in the package... then to the amount of slip you want to give the bike. Because when you get it wrong you can really tame the bike down so much that it becomes a very dumbed-down, unspectacular bike to ride.

MSL: KTMs sometimes have a reputation for being aggressive, but actually they're very balanced and controlled, yet that control seems quite transparent.

JM: It's like The Beast [the original branding for the prototype 1290 Super Duke R] – when that came along it scared a lot of people away, but we have to have a bike that – when in normal street mode – will ride absolutely as normal and tame as any bike should be on the road. Right to when you turn everything off and take it on the race track, add all the KTM PowerParts and pop wheelies in fifth gear. The bike's capable of that, but it's a lovely bike to ride in a normal way as well.

MSL: Technology is really changing things, but is there a limit? During the launch of the cornering ABS, the journalists were amazed that you can brake so hard in a corner that you could fall over, because you've reached a standstill while leaning.

JM: That was probably one of the most interesting tests we were involved in – we had quite fast journalists come along to test that who were adamant that they could cause the bike to crash. KTM said 'Go ahead, you're very welcome to try.' It won't fall over until basically you've gone beyond the adhesion of a normal road tyre.

You can ride it lent over with 40 bar of pressure on the lever – remember under normal circumstances we don't use more than about 10 bar, but you could go to 100 bar if you could squeeze that hard and the bike



ABOVE: There's a reason the R was first dubbed 'The Beast'.

won't crash. That was a big step for any manufacturer, and KTM were the first to do it. Watching the journalists try – and fail – to crash it was very rewarding. They couldn't believe it.

MSL: Some bikers think that this technology is taking control and skill away from them. Do you think there's a point where tech becomes too much?

JM: It's down to implementation – it's down to how good the test team are. Of course you can produce an ABS system that in a straight line doesn't brake as well as an experienced rider, but we had to test it against my very, very best braking capabilities. I'm being really honest when I say I can't beat the ABS system. I believe I can, but we put a marker out to measure it exactly, and I really can't; in dry, wet gravel... everything.

I don't think you can beat technology, but you can get it wrong – you can kind of miss the trick with it, but as long as you've got a very high quality R&D and test team – as KTM has – then you usually get it spot on.

MSL: Some riders here today have said that they need to turn the ABS off on track, but surely that's only really an issue when you get to your level?

JM: We raced this bike in an Endurance championship last year – and will again this year – with the ABS on. I've tried it back to back to see if I can go quicker but I really can't.

When you put a really good set of race tyres on, and then you use the traction control system on the correct profile tyre, lap times are every bit as quick as without it.

MSL: What was your involvement with the new 1290 Super Duke GT?

JM: Obviously we already had the basic bike with the SuperDuke R, so it didn't need an awful lot other than making sure the balance was correct with the semi-active WP Suspension. I had an involvement with the similar system on the 1290 Super Adventure, and now the GT has just progressed that little bit more again, as the technology gets better.

BELOW: McWilliams behind Hopkins at the 2003 Phillip Island GP.





The system's really good on the Super Adventure, and it's really good on the GT, but they're quite different bikes. We spent a number of days in Spain testing it on rough roads, normal roads, A roads, B roads, motorways... until we got to what we all agreed were the best basic settings. And then we really hammered the life out of it on a test track, because we were aware that some riders would end up doing a track day with this system on. It has to work in all scenarios.

What's lovely about having an electronic suspension system is that you can programme it from your handlebar. We had a lot of fun back-to-backing this system with the Super Duke [which doesn't have electronic suspension], and in the end we all agreed that the system is actually better overall because it's got the ability to change.

Ultimately, the end user mustn't really know it's there – that's what we tried to achieve with the GT. I haven't ridden the production machine, but I was on the P3, which is quite close – other bits and pieces that they're adding like quick-shifters and auto-blippers were all being tested.

I think there are exciting times ahead for KTM, with the GT and other new models that hopefully I'll be involved in...

MSL: Do you think KTM is a typical manufacturer, or do some others allow tradition to hamper them?

JM: I don't want to point out manufacturers that I don't think have got it right, but there are certainly some systems out there that don't exude confidence. I've ridden them, and that's what we're trying to avoid – the owner doesn't feel they have 100% confidence to

rely on the systems. I'm talking about extreme conditions, where you're really pushing – there are systems out there that aren't quite as good as they could be. That's down to what the manufacturer wants to spend on the development. But a lot of the systems are absolutely every bit as good for a normal, middle-of-the-road type rider.

MSL: Of all the bikes you've ridden, what's been the best, and what's been the most terrifying?

JM: You change with time, but right now if I could choose any bike to ride on the road I'd take a 1290 Super Adventure, because I can cruise along in Germany at 290kph with one hand on the bar for many, many miles. Then on the B roads I'm able to have as much fun as I could on a sports bike.

Recently I had to ride a sports bike for quite a long distance and I really struggled with it – it was annoying. Most of us ride for enjoyment, but I didn't enjoy it – I didn't want to be there.

When I was racing I still think the little KR3 Kenny Roberts bike [500cc V3 two-stroke] was the most ideal little race bike I've ever sat on; you could ride it out of the pits like you were riding to the shops. It didn't feel like a race bike until you were riding at like 98% on it.

The worst bike was probably the three-cylinder Aprilia Cube MotoGP bike in 2004 – I think it nearly killed Colin Edwards and Noriyuki Haga before it had a go at me. I had a torrid time with that, but no regrets – I had a lot of fun trying to make things work, but the project stopped. Thankfully. I could have had a two-year contract, but they stopped it because it wasn't going anywhere. They've produced some great race bikes since...

ABOVE: Garry McCoy leads McWilliams and John Hopkins at Phillip Island in 2003.

BELOW: McWilliams at the 2003 Mugello GP.



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CCM GP450

THE LIGHTER ALTERNATIVE

There is a refreshing alternative to the common heavyweights for riders after something different. Accomplished adventure rider **Nathan Millward** tests the CCM GP450

WORDS: Nathan Millward PHOTOGRAPHY: Joe Dick



Of the way a boy in the motorcycle industry of universal appeal, all odd jobs he would be non-to-val that of Cew Compe on Mach n Founded n 1971 by Lanca h man Alan Cl ws the company was bo n out of Alan frust ation at no being able o buy a work BSA Scramble As a tal nted b ke bu lder h m lf h abou bu ld ng h own mach n tretching a 441cc Victor engine o 490cc by inc as ng he oke f om 90mm o 100mm He neve nt nd d to turn i nto a bus nes but such was the demand that two years later CCM had turned out almo 140 machine

Success came and went over the years. In the Eighties the company was taken over by automotive giant Armstrong Equipment Ltd. There was a switch o Rotax engine , with the MT500 m lita y b ke complement ng a lin -up of ramb and a bikes. By 1987 he la on h p had our d, and CCM and Armstrong w nt th pa at ways Af w y ar n the hadows wa fo ow d by a 597cc Rotax-powe d C25 motoc os bike and the R30 Supermoto. There was a switch to Suzuki engine and

the arrival of venture capitalist Pete Sw fit and Richard Rob on the new money brought new bikes as well as new conflicts, with Alan buying the company he founded back off the investors in 2004

This renaissance gave us the FT35 Flat Tracker the CR40 and the CMX450 motocross bike. The company then began buying n and h pp ng ou mod fi d Ch n e b k fo va ou mili a y fo ces around th world, badged as the MT230. In recent years CCM decided it would need a ye aound b ke o comple n the upply of m l ary mach ne , and tt d upon the dea of bu d ng a gh we gh a na ve o h v - xpand ng wa l n of he adventure bike market. The result is the GP450 Adventure.

ENDURO POWER

Historically, CCM has always led on third party engines, and the GP450 is no different. The motor here is the liquid-cooled 449.5 cc single cylinder from the now discontinued BMW G450X (the engine produced on licence by Kymco), which in its original form produced 52bhp. Or g na y d gn d fo comp ve

enduro engine has been tuned, with peak vs reduced from 9500 rpm to 7500 rpm and power now rated at 40bhp

In the long run, a full power engine would require a full pump down after 40 hours of riding. Now with the reduced power output and rigorous demands of the road, service intervals are 5000 miles for oil filter and a valve check. You can purchase a power plug to take back up to 52bhp but that does invalidate your warranty. Some have questioned the appropriateness of the engine for long distance travel, particularly with its 10-litre oil capacity and the absence of an oil reservoir. Having ridden the bike for approximately 1000 miles for the purpose of this test, I can only tell you that there had been no noticeable drop in fluid levels.

Torque is the engine's greatest strength, pulling cleanly in fifth gear from as low as 25mph. Maximum speed is around 95mph, with a comfortable cruising speed of 65-70mph. Some complaint has also been levelled at the five-speed gearbox suggesting a six-speed box would have been preferred.

Test Ride

Specification

CCM GP450

Price: £7995

Engine: 449.50cc, liquid-cooled four-stroke, four-valve dohc single cylinder

Power: 40.2bhp (30kW) @ 7000rpm

Torque: 31.6lb-ft (42.8Nm) @ 6500rpm

Kerb weight: 145kg

Seat height: 790mm; 850mm; 890mm; 950mm

Fuel capacity: 20 litres

Contact: www.ccm-motorcycles.com

It was certainly possible, as when Husqvarna used the engine in its 449 enduro bike, it came with fitted with a six-speed gearbox (as well as a hydraulic clutch). Instead, CCM opted for the five-speed BMW application. As an experiment (he believes a successful one), one CCM owner has already set about modifying the ratios, with a lower first, and a taller fourth and fifth. Personally, I believe that the five you get are fine; well spaced with a very smooth, clutchless change.

At motorway speeds the bike's not revving uncomfortably high (the absence of a rev counter makes it difficult to record accurately), yet still with enough roll-on power for overtaking. There are some vibrations – to be expected on a single – that can seem unpleasant at first, though they're mainly through the footpegs, particularly on the transmission side. You find that with a thin trials-style boot the vibrations can become too intrusive over a long distance, but a thicker sole certainly helps, as does time on the bike, with you noticing it less with every mile.

The bike will all too easily die on a part or closed throttle at low revs – it catches you out at first, and the remedy of course is to feather the



LEFT: Basic clocks don't include a rev counter.

clutch. Once you're acclimatised to it, it's fine, and to be fair, as long as you're on the throttle the bike will pull smoothly from very low down in the revs. With 40bhp there isn't a big wallop of power, so it's never going to catch you out, but with the old fashioned cable operation – a welcome return over the snatchy ride-by-wire systems of many new adventure bikes – you can easily feel the delivery of power through the back wheel. The bike never feels truly fast, but it's certainly very brisk.

REFRESHINGLY LIGHT

One of the interesting features of the bike is the front sprocket mounted on the swingarm pivot. It was designed this way for the G450X, the intention being to keep the chain under a constant tension, regardless of suspension activity, delivering constant drive to the rear wheel. Some enduro riders didn't care for the idea and it's not been widely adopted. On the CCM it serves as a point of interest as much as a benefit





The bike's greatest strength is its refreshing lightness... even getting it out of the garage is a treat.

or flaw. Of course, the bike's greatest strengths is its refreshing lightness; low speed manoeuvring, and even getting the bike in and out of the garage is a treat. On the move the bike flows, is no hassle to corner, with good composure under braking from the very impressive single 320mm disc and Brembo caliper. You could see how – with a set of 17in wheels and road biased tyres – the bike could make a very enjoyable, and manageable, supermoto.

But it's off the road where the bike really begins to shine. The lack of weight, mated to the clean power delivery, well set up Tractive rear suspension and Marzocchi front forks means the CCM rides like a well-mannered enduro machine converted for the road, rather than a road bike converted for the dirt. It'll also take a good knock from a fall (a wing mirror the only victim in this assessment) and in being so light is easily picked up.

The bike is confusing in a sense, being pinned as an adventure bike.

At first you judge it as one intended for road use, and in returning a genuine 200 miles from the 20-litre tank you begin to consider the distances you could travel on it. But then you ride it off-road, and you realise that actually the strength of this bike is being able to spend a day or so exploring your local environment, riding the green lanes and trails, and doing so with all the comfort of a well padded seat and good fuel range.

You don't need to go far on this bike to get the best from it. To label it a 'leisure bike', rather than 'adventure bike', would perhaps be more realistic, and in doing so remove some of



History of CCM

- 1971** Alan Clews builds his first BSA-powered bike after factory refuses to sell him a works scrambler.
- 1972** Name changes from Clews Stroka to Clews Competition Machines. Company moves into first factory premises.
- 1974** CCM sells 133 bikes.
- 1980** CCM taken over by Armstrong Equipment Ltd.
- 1982** Company produces first Rotax-engined bike with Armstrong CM35 road racing bike.
- 1984** Company secures rights to produce Rotax-powered Amrstrong MT500 military machine.
- 1987** Armstrong sells off its motorcycle interests, including CCM. Alan Clews buys back the company he started.
- 1991** Fire started by thieves guts Vale Street factory. Nearly all stock destroyed.
- 1995** CCM back in business with 597cc Rotax-powered motocross bike.
- 1997** The company takes part in its first Paris-Dakar Rally.
- 1998** CCM goes into receivership and is acquired by venture capitalists Peter Swift and Richard Robson.
- 1999** CCM launches first road-based bike with the Rotax-powered 604RS.
- 2000** Carl Fogarty comes on board with a £100,000 investment and supermoto outing.
- 2002** Switch to Suzuki engine with 644cc Dual Sport and R30 and 404DS in 2003.
- 2004** Alan Clews buys back the company following its liquidation.
- 2005** CCM launches uniquely styled FT35 Flat Tracker, followed by CR40 and SR40.
- 2007** CCM sells Chinese-made CXR230 trail bike, later modified for armed forces around the world and renamed the MT230.
- 2008** CCM returns to motocross with CMX 450
- 2008** Fuji's Subaru division set to build water-cooled 500cc single for CCM.
- 2014** The GP450 Adventure is born, using a BMW/Kymco engine.



LEFT: Soft luggage frames are available.

RIGHT: Single disc is very capable for the light bike.





ABOVE: Fuel filler is behind the seat.



LEFT: More option parts with the Acerbis hand guards.



Closest rival: Rally Raid CB500X

The CB500X Adventure is the work of Northamptonshire engineering company Rally Raid, best known for its work on the KTM690. Having exhausted the possibilities of the KTM, proprietor John Mitchellson looked for a new project bike to work on, and came upon the twin cylinder 47bhp Honda. He saw potential in the basic package – a bike that was cheap, reliable, economical, and plenty fast enough for long distance adventure – it was to be a machine seldom seen in the day and age of a utilitarian bike, strong, sturdy and dependable.

The changes to the original bike come in three stages. Stage One (£795) brings upgraded standard suspension, Stage Two (£1450) adds longer travel upgraded suspension, and the Stage Three pack (£1995) combines the upgraded long travel suspension with custom spoked wheels front and rear, with the front wheel diameter up from 17in to a more off-road friendly 19in. The sidestand is also lengthened to cope with the extra ground clearance (2in front and rear) while the bar risers also come as part of the Stage Three package.

The result is a really forgiving and pliable ride on the road, with fully adjustable Tractive rear shock making a much better job of riding the lumps and bumps than the standard suspension. A little more dive under braking is the only compromise, but not a significant one. Off-road the bike isn't so much as transformed, simply made able; as long as the trail isn't too demanding the bike is in its element. In isolation it does a very commendable job. In comparison to the CCM the Rally Raid Honda does feel its 60 kilo weight disadvantage, and the bars could do with being that bit taller for stood-up riding, but this is an interesting concept, particularly as the kit can be retro-fitted to second-hand CB500Xs, meaning that for little over £6000 you can have a very competent long distance travel bike.



the pressure to perform over a long distance, something few owners will do with it anyway; Simon Collis and a few others the exception. Seat height options also go as low as 790mm, achieved through a combination of a low seat and altered suspension.

ECONOMY OF SCALE

As a trail bike to have in your garage for a bit of Sunday fun it's hard to think of anything that comes close. A KTM 690 would be more savage, but not as liveable. A Honda CRF250 would be cheaper but far from being as agile or capable. A Yamaha Tenere 660 would feel cumbersome by comparison, and a second-hand Suzuki DRZ400 would be closer to the CCM, but still not in the same league for agility.

A large part of that agility comes from the BondLite frame – CCM's own technology – which in essence sees the bonding together of cast aluminium bones to give an incredibly light, yet strong skeleton. The frame is also bolted, but not said to be necessary such is the strength of the glue.

The BondLite technique was first used on the company's RMX450 motocross bike of 1997, and goes some way to explaining why the GP450 is such a good off-road machine.

It's not perfect; the speed is slow to respond, and jumps from figure to figure. There's no centrestand (though it is an option), which is a problem if you're needing to repair a tyre in the



wild. Even checking the oil sight glass on the right is tricky, as the sidestand flicks up as soon as pressure is taken off it. This is a result of the engine not being designed with a kill-switch – a legal requirement to guard against riding off with the stand still down – and it being too costly to reverse engineer one. But these are just niggles, and a consequence of small volume production.

At £7999, some perceive this to be too much for a 450cc machine, particularly when a Triumph or BMW 800 can be bought for only a little more.

The reality of course is that a hand-built bike, with limited economies of scale, high-end components, and some really lovely design touches is never going to be as cheap as a mass-produced product.

Keith Bontrager's famous saying; "Strong, light, cheap; pick two," certainly rings true here.

For those looking for something light, loveable and different, then the GP450 Adventure is certainly worth heading up to Bolton for a test ride. It won't be for everyone, but it could very well be for you.

Riding the Trans American Trail

Simon Collis, a 51-year-old bio fuels entrepreneur and financial consultant from London, had previously ridden South America with GlobeBusters on an F800GS. It was on that trip that he was told about the Trans American Trail (TAT) – a high on five thousand mile network of off-road trails that take you from the east coast of America to the west. Having picked the route, it was then a case of choosing the right bike for it...

"I first saw the CCM at the Excel bike show back in February and thought it looked like the ideal machine. It was nicely put together and I liked how light it was. As I was to find out later, it was the light weight and excellent balance that allowed me to ride 10/12 hour days with little fatigue. The trip was 29 days, covering a total of 4940 miles."

Simon explains how the bike's greatest strength, in comparison to his friend's machine – a Yamaha WR450 – was the range (not to mention the seat comfort). "I could easily get beyond 200 miles on a tank, travelling at an average of 50mph. The bike also flattered me, such as when powering through 100 yards of deep mud, the handlebars going from lock to lock, but just being able to ride through it. I've been riding on road for 27 years, all year, every

year, but I didn't start riding off-road until 2009, so I'd only classify myself as an overly keen novice.

Asked about his TAT experience; "I would have enjoyed an extra week, a few extra days to stop and enjoy the sights. We took a tent but didn't camp once, sharing motel rooms instead. As for the bike, the only niggles were the factory panniers, which wore through and didn't last as well as we hoped. If I was riding solo I'd like one of the newer machines now most of the gremlins have been ironed out. New model glitches aside, it really is long distance trail friendly."

For more information on the Trans America Trail see www.transamtrail.com



John Drogan, CCM's sales manager



MSL: What was the intention with GP450 Adventure?

John Drogan: Being a low volume producer, supplemented by infrequent

military contracts, business demands went from feast to famine. We'd staff up for heightened production cycles, then scale right back down and cope without the military contracts. Trying to run a business with those kinds of peaks and troughs was difficult. That's why Austin – son of CCM's founder Alan Clews – sought to produce a bike with a broader and more routine appeal, and it was observing the success of the adventure bike market that he hit upon the idea of a manageable but competent adventure bike based upon the heritage of lightweight competitive machines. Our bike had to be different. We could never take on BMW or Triumph with their large capacity machines, so we decided to explore the possibility of a lightweight adventure bike; something people could really get out there and explore on.

MSL: How did you make it so light?

JD: In the past CCM has had success in various forms of motorsport. One area the company experimented was in bonded frames, which had proved a great success on our MX450 motocross bikes. The frame consists of forged aluminium sections, with no need for welding or a jig, and once assembled proves incredibly strong, light and compact. Austin looked to this as the basis for the new bike, and as a result the frame in the GP450 weighs only 9kg.

MSL: How did you choose the engine?

JD: The power plant also had to lend itself to the light and strong frame. We needed something that was reliable, available and well proven. BMW cooperated with us with the engine, supplying the CAD drawings which we started to build a bike around. They also worked with us on the engine mapping

to provide the broad spread of torque and tractability more suited to its new purpose as a long distance adventure bike, one of the main benefits being the extended in service intervals of 5000 miles. We've stripped engines that have done approaching 20,000 miles and found no wear.

MSL: Some say the price is too much for a 450cc, how do you respond to that?

JD: We could try and go cheaper to sell more units, even think about reducing the spec of some of our components, but I don't think it would benefit us as a manufacturer, as our biggest cost is staff and we don't have the capacity to scale up through automation. We also think reducing the price and the component quality would devalue the bike and its attractiveness. We find many of our customers are financially secure and are buying the bike to complement their BMW R1200 GS or equivalent. And the bike is the sum of some great parts. We wouldn't want to jeopardise that. Also, if we compromised, we might then be judged against much cheaper bikes from China.

MSL: What are the difficulties facing a small-volume manufacturer?

JD: One of the issues when starting out was economies of scale. If we say we need the next 20 seats from our supplier, or the next 20 tanks, but they say they're busy doing 5000 for Jaguar Land Rover, we don't have the financial muscle to compete. It means we have to box clever. Plan ahead. That comes down to inventory control and by injection of money. Even if you have 99% of parts in stock, you still can't build a bike, that's why the supply chain is so important for a small company such as ours.

MSL: Is being a small company beneficial?

JD: Customers can speak straight to the Director of the company, or the chief engineer. We don't have a national dealer network, instead we send a technician out to you to service the bike, to your home



The GP450 uses a bespoke bonded frame.

address or place of work. The best dealers are often tied up with other manufacturers, and the ones that want to work with us don't have the financial solvency to invest. We decided that if we can't do it that way then let's do it differently; make the service personal, come to you. We've even taken bikes to people for a test ride.

MSL: Who are your main customers?

JD: We started out with a predicted customer profile, but it seems to be changing. Initially it was BMW GS riders – white male, residing in the south east. However, when word got out that the bike flatters people, it enables them to explore, that's when we started getting interest from husband and wives; a bike to do a bit of green laning on, a bit of touring, bikes of equal ability for couples, one on a short bike, the other on a tall option. We've even fitted one with a centrifugal clutch, and are also finding it appeals to the older riders, perhaps with a bit of arthritis, who don't feel comfortable on the bigger bikes any more but still want to carry on riding. Many customers have bought the bike to do a specific trip, like the Trans America Trail for example.

MSL: Where does the project go from here?

JD: The GP450 Adventure is very close to being able to fulfil its own potential. So far we've made a number of improvements to the bike, including rear tank and breathers for example, responding to feedback from customers. Going forwards we also have the opportunity and flexibility to slightly change the bike and make a pure road version. For that it wouldn't need the fully adjustable suspension it's currently got, and we'd consider smaller wheels and possibly open up new colour options. Whatever we do we wouldn't want to jeopardise what makes the GP450 so unique: its lightness. We also know there's a lot of pent-up demand in America and Australia where they have thousands of miles of trails to explore, so we're working towards homologation for those markets.

MSL: How will you respond to stricter euro emission requirements and mandatory ABS?

JD: Our R&D team are working on a five year development programme for the model and we hope to share those plans soon.



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56 YEARS OF THE BONNEVILLE

As Triumph unveils its latest model, Ian Falloon takes a look back at one of the most iconic motorcycles ever built...

WORDS: Ian Falloon

In the 1950s a worldwide battle erupted over the outright motorcycle land speed record. Wilhelm Herz on an NSU streamliner had set a record of 180mph in 1951, and in July 1955 – on a narrow country road outside Christchurch, New Zealand – Russell Wright took his Vincent Black Lightning to a new record of 185mph. In America, speed attempts took place on the salt flats at Bonneville, Utah, and in September 1955 Johnny Allen managed a two-way flying kilometre of 193.7mph on a streamlined Triumph 6T Thunderbird. This was clearly a new record but was only recognized by the AMA – not the FIM – as the AMA was not affiliated with the FIM at that time. Allen went back to Bonneville in 1956 posting a best two-way run of

214.17mph. Again the FIM refused to accept this as a World Record but Triumph boss Edward Turner was unperturbed. He decided every new Triumph would have a decal claiming “World Motorcycle Speed Record Holder” and this resulted in a prolonged legal rift with the FIM, ultimately resulting – in 1960 – in a two-year suspension of Triumph’s FIM licence. But none of this mattered. In American eyes the record stood and Triumph benefited enormously.

By 1959 Edward Turner seemed more interested in scooters and dubious bathtub styling, but America was still Triumph’s most important market. Americans wanted a twin carburettor 650, and although Turner initially believed it would lead Triumph to bankruptcy, by August 1958 he finally agreed to give the project production approval. As it was primarily destined for America, and Johnny Allen’s performances at

BELOW: The Bonneville was too late to be included in Meriden’s 1959 catalogue, but a single-page sheet appeared later.

Ian Falloon



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Bonneville were still reasonably fresh, the new machine was titled the Bonneville. Not only was the naming of the Bonneville inspirational, the model would become one of the most significant motorcycles of all time.

1959-62 T120 BONNEVILLE 650

As it was ostensibly a modified T110 Tiger, in some respects the early Bonneville was a disappointment, but the engine did include a number of significant updates; notably a stronger crankshaft, and a new twin carburettor cylinder head. While the '120' (for 120mph) designation may have been illusory, the Bonneville was still one of the fastest motorcycles available. But there was no disguising its T110 roots and unfortunate colours, personally chosen by Turner.

The early Bonneville also suffered from Turner's obsessive cost cutting, the single down tube frame and 8in single leading shoe front brake not really up to the task and stretched to the limit. The T110's headlight nacelle, high handlebars, large dual seat and deeply valanced fenders also failed to strike a chord with buyers in America, and as a result many Tangerine 1959 Bonneville's ended up unsold, and were listed again for 1960. Despite their unpopularity at the time, today the 1959 Tangerine models are among the most sought after of all Bonneville's.

The Bonneville was significantly updated for 1960, not only mechanically, but also stylistically. Blue replaced the unloved Tangerine, and a separate headlight and instruments replaced the bulky nacelle. Along with the more sporting profile was a new Duplex frame and a new front fork. The T120 more than lived up to its name with Gary Richards clocking 149.51mph at Bonneville to set a new record for an unfaired motorcycle. He followed this in 1961 with a run of 159.54mph.

ABOVE: By 1961 the Bonneville had evolved into a beautiful and highly efficient motorcycle.

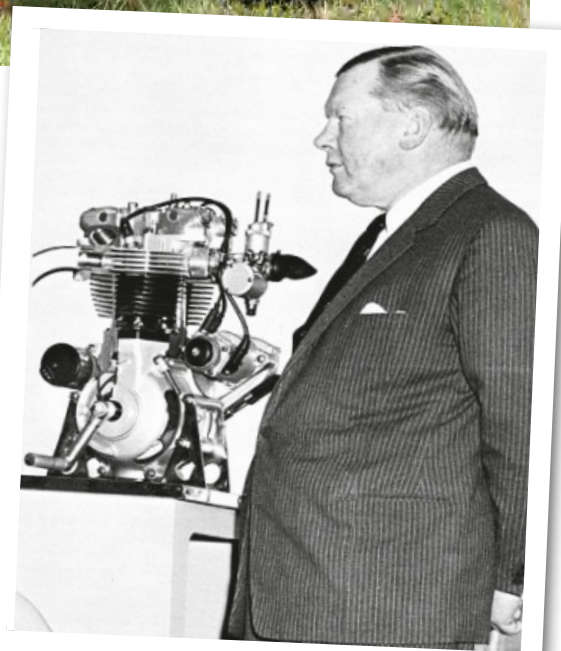
Ian Falloon

RIGHT: Edward Turner with his T110 twin. This received an aluminium cylinder head and Amal monobloc carburettor for 1956.

Ian Falloon

BELOW: Even if the range was pitiful, the 1966 Bonneville looked extremely purposeful with its small, 'slim-line' fuel tank.

Ian Falloon



With attractive new blue and silver colours, the 1961 T120R (Road) was arguably the quintessential pre-unit (separate engine and gearbox) Triumph twin. While engine and chassis updates were minor, the brakes were improved, both front and rear now with fully floating shoes. The T120R also had the performance to match its stunning looks, vindicated in the Thruxton 500 Mile race for production motorcycles. This year Tony Godfrey and John Holder won at 67.29mph, Bonnevilles also finishing second, fourth, fifth, and sixth.

As the 1962 edition was the final version of the pre-unit Bonneville there were few updates. A new crankshaft reduced vibration and although Triumph finally had the frame and carburetors sorted, it was to no avail as an all-new unit (the engine and gearbox sharing the same casing) T120 would appear for 1963. But the pre-unit T120 maintained a loyal following, particularly among the Triton and Café Racer crowd who preferred the earlier charismatic 650. The crowning glory for the pre-unit T120 was Bill Johnson's 224.57mph motorcycle world speed record, set at Bonneville on September 5, 1962. This time the record was fully recognized by the FIM.

1963-65 T120 BONNEVILLE 650

As the 'C' range of twins had been unit construction since 1957, it was inevitable Triumph would unitize Edward Turner's original parallel twin. Unit construction made sense on several fronts – particularly in reducing manufacturing costs – and considering Turner's predilection for economic rationalization it was surprising a unit 650 took so long to appear. More evolutionary than revolutionary,



ABOVE: The 1968 dual seat had a chrome trim band. US models such as this still featured an alloy tail-light housing, but now with red indicators due to federal rules. UK version retained the earlier tail-light bracket. *Triumph Motorcycles America*

BELOW: The new 650cc unit-construction engine followed the lines of the earlier Twenty-One. Internally, it was similar to the pre-unit version. *Ian Fallow*

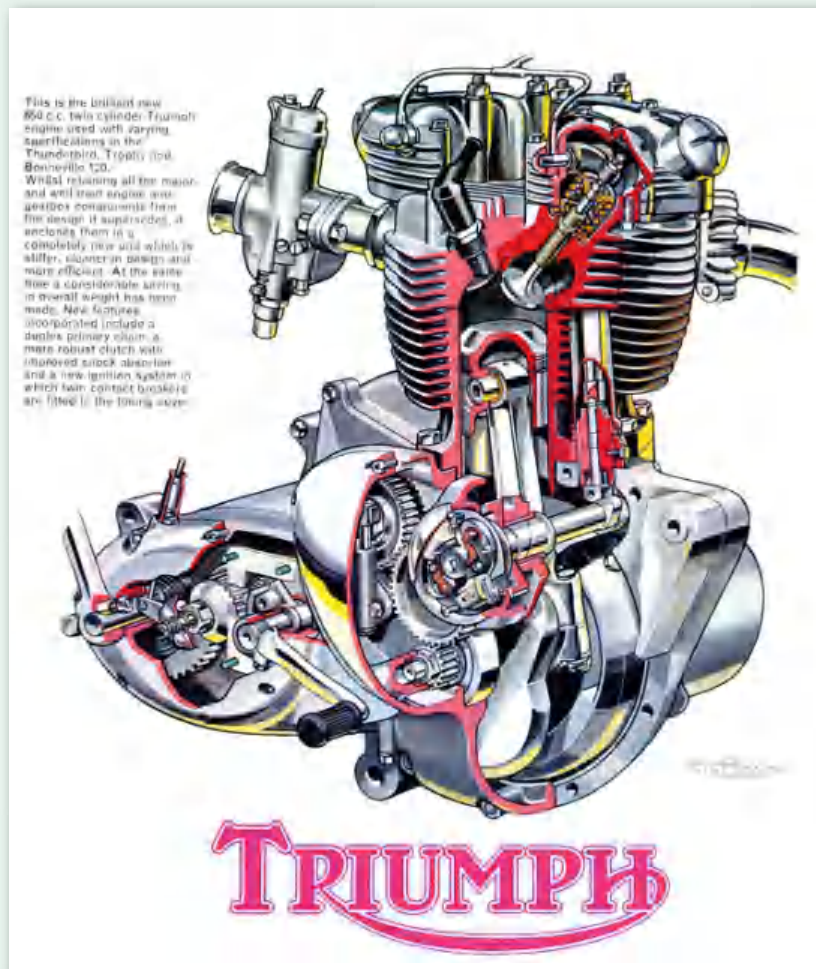
many of the engine internals were similar to the pre-unit 650. Late in 1962 Doug Hele joined Triumph as development engineer, and he would have a major impact on the Bonneville's development, contributing significantly to Triumph's racing success during the 1960s. The Bonneville established itself as the most iconic British sporting motorcycle of the era, and such was the Bonnie's allure, it sold three times as many as comparable Norton and BSA twins.

With its new single down tube frame, the unit construction Bonneville harked back to the first T120 of 1959, but the previously unsupported swingarm lug was now integrated with stiffer rear engine plates. The engine specifications for the unit T120 were largely unchanged from the previous year, but as the entire engine structure was more rigid, vibration was increased. Although significantly lighter and better handling, there were still some reliability issues, primarily electrical, yet despite these niggles the Bonneville was still the bike to have in 1963.

Doug Hele's influence became more apparent during 1964, the Bonneville receiving a stronger front fork to improve high-speed stability. The engine was also updated, including new crankcases with an improved crankcase breather, and modifications to counter the perennial problem of oil leakage. Oil leaks would plague Triumph's reputation throughout the 1960s and they would never be fully solved. Apart from a classic new colour scheme, the Bonneville was little changed for 1965.

1966-67 T120 BONNEVILLE 650

The policy of the Bonneville's continual development reached its zenith from 1966, and this year the T120 incorporated many updates; inside the engine was a new crankshaft and flywheel assembly – 2½lb trimmer and providing more throttle response at the expense of teeth-shattering vibration at higher speeds. For 1967 new Amal Concentric carburetors replaced the Monobloc, and UK versions now received the US 19in front wheel. And when it came to performance, the 1967 Bonneville didn't disappoint – ex-factory MV Agusta rider John Hartle piloting a T120 to victory in the Hutchinson 100 at 83.87mph, and the Isle of Man Production TT at 97.1mph. The Bonneville also won the 500-mile production race at Brands Hatch for the third successive year, factory tester Percy Tait teaming with Rod Gould. They won at 79.15mph, their Bonneville sporting a new twin leading shoe front brake that would be seen on the production version for



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T140E Bonneville European

On y UK spec
Bonnev es we e bu t
fo 1980 e the
Eu opean ve s ons such
as this one, or American
versions w th h gh
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an Fal oon

1968. And it wasn't just performance that kept the machine on top; the Bonneville epitomized style and in the 1968 film *Coogan's Bluff*, Clint Eastwood rode an Aubergine and white 1967 model T120R through Central Park, New York.

1968-70 T120, T120R BONNEVILLE 650

As with fine wines, the best motorcycles also have standout vintage years, and for the T120 Bonneville these were between 1968 and 1970. For 1968 the Bonneville came of age, now with a race-developed 8in twin leading shoe front brake and a front fork with floating shuttle valves, providing two-way damping. Several engine updates were also incorporated, gradually solving small problems that had appeared over the years, the Bonneville finally now with the substance to match the style.

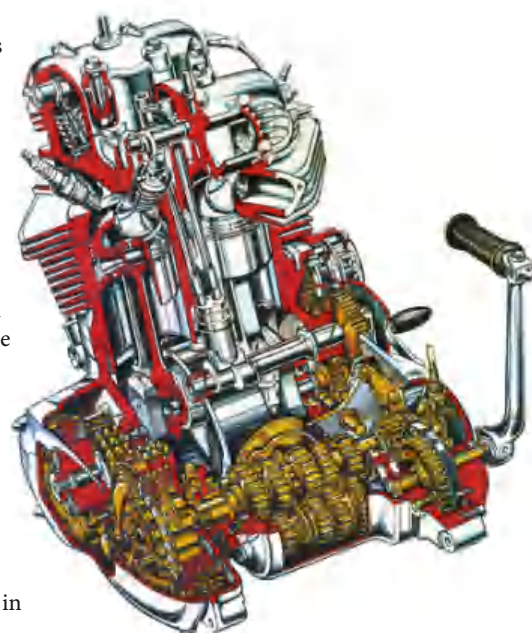
The following year saw the Bonneville further refined, into arguably the finest of all. The Amal carbs were rubber mounted, and to reduce noise the exhaust header pipes included a balance tube. Not only was 1969 a highpoint for the Bonneville in specification, it was also a highpoint for racing success. Malcolm Uphill won the Isle of Man Production TT on a Bonneville, at an average speed of 99.99mph, with the first ever 100mph lap on a production motorcycle. Uphill also teamed Steve Jolly for a class victory in the Barcelona 24-hour endurance race, and with Percy Tait to take the Thruxton 500-mile race at a record speed. This was a great event for the Bonneville, T120s following in second, fifth, sixth, and seventh.

By 1970 the Bonneville had evolved into the quintessential Triumph twin. As the 1969 T120 was already finely developed, updates were minor, the engine now including a crankcase breathing arrangement similar to the Trident. Surprisingly, just when the Bonneville was arguably at its peak, a completely new design replaced it.

1971-88 T120, T140 BONNEVILLE 650 AND 750

Back in 1969 BSA/Triumph announced their way forward was to incorporate an updated chassis with the existing engines, and the first of these new designs was the controversial P39. This was Triumph's first all-welded production frame, and their first duplex type since 1962, the most significant feature a 4in backbone tube that acted as an oil reservoir, unfortunately raising the seat height by 3in. Along with the new frame was a Ceriani-style two-way damped front fork, conical hub brakes, and tapered silencers. Although now virtually universally despised, at the time the oil-in-frame Bonneville met with a positive press response but it was a failure in the marketplace.

BELOW: The 750 engine featured revised rocker inspection plates and had shorter cylinders than before, most with a 10-bolt cylinder head. This March 1973 example has shorter cylinders but not the 10-bolt cylinder head and new crankcase castings. Ian Falloon



Due to the stockpile of 1971 models, the 1972 650cc twins were initially little changed. The problematic five-speed T120RV Bonneville also became available this year, but the most significant update was to the chassis; Meriden finally accepting the seat was too high and incorporating some suspension modifications. Many more updates appeared for 1973 – somewhat surprising considering the general uncertainty surrounding BSA and Meriden at the time. Although the 650 T120R Bonneville continued as before, the most important development was the introduction of the 750 T140V. Americans had been requesting a 750cc twin for several years, and initially this was simply an over-bored 650, displacing 724cc, but new cylinder castings soon allowed another bore increase, providing 744cc. Unfortunately, the 750 arrived a little late, and was still considered unrefined among the increasingly sophisticated Japanese competition.

With the Meriden blockade in full swing, only a few 650 and 750cc twins were available during 1974. Meriden recommenced production in March 1975, but the factory was marking time until it could introduce the US-legal Bonneville for 1976. Awash with stockpiled motorcycles, a quick life-saver appeared in 1977 with the commemorative Silver Jubilee, a clever cosmetic adaptation of a standard Bonneville. Representing 25% of the year's production, this was a brilliant marketing move and provided Meriden with a lot of publicity. A continued preoccupation with the US market saw the Bonneville further modified to meet new emission requirements during 1978, this becoming the T140E, and evolving into the custom T140D Bonneville Special for 1979. By 1981 the Bonneville gained an electric start and was offered with a standard fairing and luggage as the Executive. Severely undercapitalised, Meriden suffered a continual decline, motorcycles only built to order in 1982. The final Meriden Bonneville had Marzocchi suspension and Bing carburettors, and a promotional bonus at this difficult time came when Richard Gere used a T140E in the 1982 Paramount film *An Officer and a Gentleman*. By the time the film appeared Gere's earlier model T140E looked decidedly vintage, yet it still didn't hurt Triumph's sales. But Meriden finally ground to a halt; the last Bonneville built in January 1983. Eventually John Bloor acquired the name, patents and manufacturing rights, Bloor leasing the



ABOVE: The Jubilee Bonneville was a great marketing move, and many were put away as investments. *Triumph Motorcycles*



RIGHT: One of the 2006 Classic 'sixty8' accessorised Bonneville. *Triumph Motorcycles*

BELOW: Harris Bonneville were kick-start only, and many components were sourced from Italy, including the large Lafranconi silencers. *Australian Motorcycle News*



rights to build the existing T140 Bonneville for five years to Les Harris' Racing Spares in Devon. Bloor's agreement specified the bikes must be the same specification as Meriden's pre-closure and the first Harris Bonneville appeared in June 1985.

From the outset the Harris operation was doomed. Due to the high cost of liability insurance the Harris Bonneville couldn't be sold in the US, and as it was expensive it was difficult to sell in the UK. By 1988 the existing dies for crankcases, cylinder heads and rocker boxes were also worn out and needing replacement. With less than two years left for the licence, Harris couldn't justify the expense of replacing the dies and the last Harris Bonneville was produced in 1988.

2001-15 BONNEVILLE

In 1995, 29 years after the demise of the iconic Meriden Thunderbird, Hinckley Triumph released its new retro-styled Thunderbird. The Thunderbird included design elements strongly evocative of earlier Triumphs, chiming a chord of recognition with the past. And following the Thunderbird's success, it was only a matter of time before the most famous of all, the Bonneville, would reappear. The Bonneville was an icon, coloured with nostalgia and Triumph decided on one of its greatest models – the 1969 T120 Bonneville – as the inspiration for the new version. The key brief was that the new Bonneville had to be light, agile, and corner well. Traditional capacities, 750 and even 650cc, were considered, before settling on a 790cc double-overhead camshaft air/oil-cooled parallel twin with the camshaft drive between the cylinders. In keeping with tradition, the crank was a 360-degree type, with two balance shafts to quell vibration. But the retro look only carried so far, with Triumph believing its new



RIGHT: Belstaff's 60th Anniversary Bonneville was in black and gold, linked to its identity of producing waxed-cotton motorcycle clothing. *Triumph Motorcycles America*



The new decade saw an explosion in Bonneville limited editions; in 2010 a T100 Bonneville Sixty inspired by the 1960 T120 Bonneville, followed a year later by a Steve McQueen Limited Edition T100, and then, to celebrate its 110th Anniversary, a special edition Bonneville T100 inspired by the 1902 No.1 model. With a seemingly insatiable nostalgic market, special edition Bonneville had been a successful addition to Triumph's classic range for many years, so it was no surprise to see another two for 2014, one replicating the short-lived 1982 eight-valve TSS, and the other 50 years since the 1964 ISDT, in which four British Triumph riders won Gold Medals. And for 2015 Triumph introduced three Bonneville Special Editions, the Spirit, Newchurch, and T214.

And now we see the new Bonneville adding another chapter to the history of one of the world's most iconic motorcycles...

customers wanted a modern motorcycle in period dress, the lack of a kick-start providing convenience over quirkiness.

Also traditional in layout, the chassis included a tubular steel cradle frame, with twin downtubes, a box-section swingarm, disc brakes front and rear and a traditional 19in front wheel. John Mockett provided the styling and with the new Bonneville Triumph created a compact, but somewhat heavy, retro bike with comfortable suspension and excellent handling.

For 2002 Triumph attempted to conquer the American cruiser market with a chopped retro Bonneville – the Bonneville America – and introduced a higher spec version, the T100 Centennial, which was joined by a Bonneville SE for 2005.

New for 2006 was a custom range for the Bonneville; the 'sixty8'. These contemporary accessories moved away from tradition, with stylish laptop bags instead of panniers, and iPod holders instead of tank bags. Appealing to a more style-oriented clientele, one celebrity seduced by the 'sixty8' was George Clooney.

The Bonneville shared the 865cc T100 engine for 2007, and during 2008 Keihin multipoint sequential electronic fuel injection replaced the carburettors. Celebrating the Bonneville's 50th Anniversary Triumph announced two special editions, one by Hollywood star Ewan McGregor and the other by high-end motorcycling fashion designers Belstaff, along with a special Bonneville 50th Anniversary edition painted in the same 'Tangerine Dream' colours of the first 1959 Bonneville. The Bonneville and Bonneville SE received a pair of 17in cast alloy wheels, styled similarly to those of the original 1979 Meriden Bonneville Special T140D's cast alloy Morris wheels.

ABOVE: Ewan McGregor with his interpretation of the 50th Anniversary Bonneville. Unique features included a copper-plated tank and waxed-cotton seat and side covers. *Triumph Motorcycles America*



RIGHT: Painted to replicate one of the last Meriden Bonneville – the 1982 eight-valve TSS – the Jet Black and Lunar Silver T100 Special Edition included hand-painted gold pinstripes and a brush finish on the engine covers. *Triumph Motorcycles*

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“IN 2016 YOU’LL SEE THE FRUITS OF OUR LABOURS”

Alan Cathcart talks to Victory and Indian’s Steve Menneto.

WORDS: Alan Cathcart
PHOTOGRAPHY: Kevin Wing & Polaris Industries



Steve Menneto saw the potential of Indian. The 49-year-old vice-president of motorcycles for Polaris Industries Inc. sold his fellow board members on the idea of acquiring the classic brand. Then he had to make it work; a task he and his team at Polaris HQ in Medina, Minnesota, seem to have carried out exceptionally well, with Indian and Victory sales up a massive 74% year-on-year in the first quarter of 2015 to \$137.4 million, as part of Polaris’ record first quarter sales totalling \$1033.3 million, up 16% from last year’s Q1 sales of \$888.3 million.

Polaris has traditionally declined to reveal actual production numbers, but it’s possible to work out that it built just over 8000 motorcycles from January to March this year at its plant at Spirit Lake, Iowa, and is aiming to deliver more than 30,000 this year, fuelled especially by orders for the new Scout.

Menneto has a unique understanding of the industry, having started out as a Polaris dealer in New York, before joining the company 17 years ago as director of sales for Polaris’ Motorcycles Division. He took over the responsibility for Victory Motorcycles from Mark Blackwell in May 2009, and then after Polaris purchased Indian in April 2011 from British entrepreneur Stephen Julius’s Stellican Corp, he was promoted to vice-president of motorcycles.

Visiting him in his office at Polaris HQ brought the chance to find out more about his plans for Victory as well as Indian – including bringing what was once America’s most famous competition brand back to the racetrack...

ALAN CATHCART: Steve, you must be pretty satisfied that you managed to persuade your board of management to purchase Indian, with your first quarter results showing such a steep rise in motorcycle sales year-on-year.

STEVE MENNETO: Actually, our president and CEO Scott Wine and I were the ones who jointly persuaded the board to do that, but we’re indeed pleased about where Indian is right now. We know we’re only at the beginning of building a business with great products, but right now we’re working on creating a fine ownership experience.

We’re ahead of plan on our growth, and we’re happy with where we are on our dealer counts at home and abroad. We have a little over 200 dealers right now in North America, and about 150 overseas for Indian. In terms of applicants we could easily have had a couple of thousand dealers, just like that – I mean that literally, because the interest was so high because of the values of the Indian brand. But when we started focusing on their commitment to serving the





The Indian Dark Horse (left) is a bike that sometimes appeals to potential Victory customers, while the Victory Magnum X1 has been known to sway an Indian buyer.

customer and creating a great ownership experience, then we were able to whittle it right down to the folks that are truly interested in serving the brand.

AC: Do you think having the two brands in a dealership means they support one another?

SM: Sometimes you get people coming in to look at an Indian, but they're more a modern style person and say, "That Magnum, that X1, that's way cool," and they end up going that way. Or they're after a Victory, and find the Indian Dark Horse is a real eye-catcher. I've seen them switch!

AC: What's driven that steep increase in sales – is it the Scout, or the bigger engined Chief and Chieftain?

SM: Both, actually. Our big bikes are growing in volume quite well, but the Scout has really been a game-changer for us, even though right now it's only

selling about a quarter of what our big bikes are doing. Part of our challenge is getting that product to market – demand way outstrips supply.

AC: Are you still working just a single shift at your Spirit Lake factory?

SM: We have three assembly lines in Spirit Lake, with a separate Chief line, a separate Scout line, and a separate Victory line, and we're working two shifts on each line building Indian product, while on the third line we jump back and forth between Indian and Victory, but still a double shift. One of the great challenges we have at Spirit Lake is that we employ a high percentage of the local working community, so when we look to expand our shifts we have to spread the radius to find people to staff them. We're now up to running buses from 40 miles out to draw on a further pool of partners. We're running full bore at Spirit Lake.

AC: Scott Wine stated for your first quarter figures that there had been some "ongoing product inefficiencies, especially in motorcycles". What were these?

SM: We put in a new paint system at Spirit Lake to improve the volume and the quality, and we had a challenge with delays caused by weather – we had a couple of months of heavy storms. So right now we're feeling the pain of debugging the system during production, rather than running up our new paint system parallel with the old, and then switching over, so that's causing us some grief in terms of volume constraint.

AC: So far all your motorcycles are being built in Spirit Lake, but Polaris Group opened a new factory in Poland last year, and has one being built in Huntsville, Alabama. Are we likely to see those producing motorcycles in future, if you have a problem with Spirit Lake's labour pool?

SM: No, not Indian branded motorcycles, nor Victory. Our ORV [off-road vehicle] business is growing tremendously alongside motorcycles, so Huntsville is totally ORV, as is Opolo in Poland, because the growth of that business has been absolutely tremendous for both side-by-sides and ATVs. But as we look to





LEFT: One of the most iconic Indian Racer shots showing the terrible, dusty conditions the riders – and machines – had to endure.

ABOVE: Floyd Emde wins the 1948 Daytona 200 on an Indian.

expand production around the world, one of the things we want to make clear is that this is only to support our global ORV business that's growing so fast, not to build Victory or Indian motorcycles. It's like when we went to [open a plant in] Monterey, Mexico, and the first question everyone asked was: "So you're gonna make Indians and Victorys in Mexico, right?" No! Part of the value of the Indian and Victory brands is that they're manufactured in America, and Spirit Lake is our centre of excellence for motorcycles. We have capacity to go bigger there, so before we go to another plant we'll expand to the maximum there. The new paint system entailed building a two-storey 111,000sq ft addition that represents over \$30 million in terms of investment, so our commitment to making great motorcycles is there.

AC: Presumably Spirit Lake will soon have a fourth production line added, because you purchased

BELOW: Fred 'Demon' Marsh was approached by Indian in 1926 to open a dealership in Hartford, quitting Harley-Davidson. Even at 100 years old, he was riding an Indian-badged 50cc scooter.



Brammo in January this year, which was America's second largest electric motorcycle manufacturer until they suspended production last year?

SM: That'll be in the fall of this year. We made an investment in Brammo in 2011, but the company didn't flourish, and it was evident it needed Polaris' management to make it work properly. Brammo will allow us to explore the opportunities in an electric powertrain for motorcycles, and we think it's going to be an important area as we go forward. Volume-wise it's not so big right now, but where we want it to be more performance focused. So it's not about basic transportation from A to B with an electric motorcycle – we don't want to do that with our brands. It's much more having fun with an electric motorcycle, and racing our bike in the Isle of Man TT Zero this year was all part of that.

AC: Is Brammo's founder Craig Bramscher part of the deal?

SM: He's still in Oregon running his business there. We have only acquired the motorcycle part of Brammo, which is still a powertrain company in its own right, but in non-powersports sectors.

AC: So now you're about to start building Brammo motorcycles in Spirit Lake. Will they still have a gearbox?

SM: The first editions will, but we're going to take a look at that. In any case, they will be branded as Victory – Brammo motorcycles as a brand has ceased to exist as far as complete motorcycles go, though the power train will still be branded as Brammo. They'll continue to make the motor and the battery for us for the time being.

AC: However, weren't the Victory entries in the Isle of Man TT essentially rebranded Brammos?

SM: No, they were Victory bikes powered by the Brammo powertrain, but with Victory engineering. Before we purchased Brammo, we had already begun to leverage their expertise as partners, and to couple that with what our gang of motorcycle guys had put together at our R&D Centre in Wyoming, Minnesota. Keep in mind we'd been working all along with

Brammo on various things as a partner of ours since 2011 – you'll see Brammo's powertrain technology in other Polaris products besides motorcycles.

AC: Polaris Industries' commitment to electric vehicles is pretty broad; you've also acquired Chrysler's GEM/Global Electric Motorcars operation, as well as Aixam Mega and Goupil in France, both of which make small electric commercial vehicles. Brammo provides a motorcycle addition to the Polaris product portfolio, which puts Harley-Davidson's LiveWire E-concept in an interesting context!

SM: That's part of why we invested in Brammo originally – we didn't want to be flat footed in that area, but we intend to lead the sector strategically. We see the importance of this application as continuing to rise, but I think there's a fork in the road in the way people look at electric motorcycles. There'll be some who say, "I just need electric transportation, nothing more – it's quick, it's cheap, it's clean and easy, and it's what it says about me as a person in terms of the environment." Good luck to them; but then there's going to be other folks who say, "I get that whole 'green is good' world, but I want some performance to it, to have fun riding an electric bike and going with something that's completely different than anything else on two wheels with a combustion engine." That's where we look at being with Victory.

AC: As I mentioned, Victory went racing in the Isle of Man TT this year, as well as at Pikes Peak with a combustion engined motorcycle. Is it your plan that it should be the Polaris performance bike brand?

SM: Yes – and in addition to those two things, we've also gone to the NHRA drag race circuit with Victory this year, with Matt and Angie Smith as our drivers in a fully-fledged Victory race team. So we are excited about that, and it's great for our dealers to support when the racing comes to town in their area. Pikes Peak is an interesting deal – we called it Project 156, because there are 156 corners in the ride up the mountain, and it's about our ability to take a prototype engine that we've been working on, and show that Victory can be a pretty nice, aggressive, performance brand.

So when you look at our Isle of Man efforts, at our NHRA efforts, then at our Project 156 effort, I think



ABOVE: Project 156's engine will be seen – in some form – in a production bike to be announced in 2016.

you're seeing where Victory is going as a performance motorcycle brand, and how it's starting to break away from what it used to be. By contrast with Indian, we've identified the Victory customer to be perhaps younger and more technology focused, so now we're addressing that in competition.

AC: You finished third in the Isle of Man, though it was a small field, but sadly Don Canet riding the Project 156 Victory at Pikes Peak slid off it early in the race, and although he got going again the bike DNF'd near the finish, presumably because of accident damage. How do you evaluate the results of Victory's international competition debut? Do you plan to return to either venue?

SM: I evaluate the results as promising – we are very excited about our results at the Isle of Man. It was Victory's first time out, and the team met the challenges of a demanding race with a lap over 110mph [Lee Johnston finished third for Victory at 111.62 mph]. We learned a lot, and have a first time podium to build on. Project 156 was bittersweet – we had a great bike that went fastest on the mountain, but to finish first you first have to finish. The bike performed extremely well, and our rider was pushing hard for the win – I like aggressive riders who want to win.

AC: Is the engine powering Project 156 the prototype for a new Victory production streetbike motor?

SM: Yes, we wanted to test different things with it out on the track, and I think in 2016 you'll be able to see the fruit of our guys' labours on this in the showroom.

AC: So we're essentially looking at a new Victory line with that engine that'll be launched in 2016 as a 2017 model range?

SM: Potentially, yes – we'll launch it sometime during the calendar year of 2016. It will be a mid-sized bike, almost 1200cc.

BELOW: Victory's TT Zero success is a nod towards its intentions with electric vehicles; they will NOT be about the A-to-B journeys...



AC: 1200cc is of course the twin-cylinder Superbike capacity limit. Could we see a Victory superbike?

SM: We have a lot of things we could do with that engine!

AC: It looks like a large-scale version of the Scout engine, so a double overhead cam eight-valve motor. Is it just a similar kind of aesthetic, or is it actually shared technology as well?

SM: It's a very interesting design – it's not a Scout, it will have a family platform with the Scout, but the look I think is not even close apart from the overall layout with similar V-twin cylinder angles and so forth.

AC: It was slightly surprising to see Victory as the brand that Polaris went racing with at Pikes Peak, because Indian has always been perceived to be the sportier one, with a glorious competition history stretching back 110 years. Is Indian ever going to go racing, as well?

SM: That has to be the number one question I've been asked since we acquired the Indian brand back in 2011! I've always said 'later on', but now you're the first person I can tell that in late 2016 or early 2017 you'll see Indian go racing in AMA flat-track. I don't have anything more to tell you at this stage, beyond the fact that the decision has been made, and we're definitely going racing with Indian in the oval track world with a factory supported team.

AC: Wow! I wonder what Harley-Davidson's response to that will be! It presupposes therefore that you will be working on an Indian performance race motor, maybe a 750. Are you?

SM: Sorry, that's all I can tell you right now – but we're really excited about this, and we will give it our best shot!



ABOVE: One of the Indian Road Bikes at League Park, 66th & Lexington in Cleveland, Ohio.

AC: Okay, for flat-track racing it must be a twin, plus maybe a single for quarter-miles – but is there a limitation on how many cylinders any future Indian engine should have? Can you envisage making a four-cylinder Indian Superbike?

SM: There's a good percentage of our potential customers who would actually like us to make only classic V-twin cruisers. But in studying the brand and spending a lot of time with our product development team, I understand that Indian has the opportunity to go wherever it would like in terms of product. So I'd like to see Indian stretching far beyond its classic cruiser heritage, and getting into being technically innovative, and going into different market segments. I think it'll be exciting, and I think it'll be welcomed by customers.

AC: One of the several partnerships Polaris has made in recent years has been with Eicher in India, the owners of Royal Enfield. You have a joint venture with them in India – what exactly is it?

SM: We have teamed up with those guys on manufacturing some of our non-motorcycle side-by-side vehicles in India for the Indian market. We built a factory together in India to do that.

AC: But Eicher is also the owner of Royal Enfield, which is in the middle of a spectacular expansion programme, having acquired Harris Performance, and hired a significant number of former Triumph development engineers as well as acclaimed stylist Pierre Terblanche for its growing British-based R&D operation. Is Polaris looking at working with Eicher in developing a single cylinder Indian motorcycle platform – maybe for AMA flat-track?

SM: I think Scott Wine has been clear that we want to become a bigger player on the global stage in motorcycles, and we know that there are opportunities with these in other markets that we should be playing



BELOW: Dave Kinnie on a flathead V-twin racer



ABOVE: The Core is a real indication of the potential future direction for Victory motorcycles.

in. Eicher is a great partner to work with, and we're exploring opportunities not only with them, but also with others. Some opportunities have come and gone, so we have nothing yet that's really tangible enough that we could say – yep, this is where we're going. But the opportunity to grow our business into other global markets, and especially in Asia, is something we're actively looking at doing. As KTM has demonstrated, that strategy works well.

AC: To the point that you might have a joint venture with Eicher on producing a Victory or Indian range of single-cylinder motorcycles in India, or entry-level V-twins like the Harley 750cc Street that's made there?

SM: That's always a potential route to take.

AC: Might Polaris end up importing Royal Enfields into the USA, for your dealers to sell alongside Indian and Victory?

SM: We haven't gotten that far in deciding that yet, and I don't know if Siddhartha [Lal – Royal Enfield CEO] has decided whether he needs our help in that area. That's one of the several things that we're talking over with them.

AC: Polaris Corp's development as a company has seen your share price ramp up exponentially from less than \$8 in 2008 to over \$160 today. You've consistently posted ever-increasing profits, which have in turn allowed Scott Wine and your board to pursue an expansionary acquisition strategy. Would that include acquiring another global motorcycle brand that could be ripe for purchase?

SM: Yes, it could. Scott Wine and the board have done a great job of assembling the talent here at Polaris to grow the business at a rapid pace. Part of our strategy has been organic growth, but part has also been acquisitive in adding on non-organic businesses, and the motorcycle sector is a space that we've defined as

being a place we want to be in as a significant player over time. So nothing is off the table in motorcycles.

AC: Would that include making John Bloor an offer he couldn't refuse for Triumph?

SM: I don't know about an offer he couldn't refuse, but I would say that if there's an opportunity for our companies to speak, we'd like to have a conversation.

AC: The apparel and aftermarket accessories sector has traditionally been a highly profitable one for dealers. Are you focusing more closely on that? For other manufacturers, and especially your key US competitor, it's a core element in their dealers' profitability.

SM: Yes, we're ramping that up in both areas; accessories and apparel. Both are growing rapidly, and growth in the apparel segment especially is really phenomenal, but we're not at the levels we want to be yet. It takes investment over time to produce results, and when you look at Harley-Davidson's thick book of accessories, that didn't happen in just one year.

AC: Related to that strategy, Harley-Davidson has developed a series of small volume, high-end CVO custom bikes. Is that something you're planning to do, especially with Indian?

SM: We think customisation is a big opportunity for Indian, but the challenge that we have is to get

There's a good percentage of our customers who would actually like us to make only classic V-twin cruisers... Indian has the opportunity to go wherever it would like...

through the initial ramp-up with the brand. With bringing on so many new dealers, and introducing several new models, while we're looking at getting focused on customisation, at this point in our history it starts to throw a pretty big wobble into the factory if we build that side of the business up too much right now.

Our Spirit Lake factory is pumping out bikes as fast as it can, while still maintaining the high quality levels customers associate with our products. So as I said earlier, we're trying to increase numbers coming off the assembly lines, especially of the Scout. We have the capability already preplanned in on the customisation side, just not for today right now, but very soon in the future. They'll come further down the line when we've essentially caught up with the volumes of the standard motorcycles that people are ordering.

AC: In his Q1 report, Scott Wine said motorcycle sales were down 15% for export in the first quarter of this year. Do you attribute that to the dollar exchange rates, or to other factors?

SM: The currency issue has been a challenge for all businesses, because it impacts overall revenue after adjustments for exchange rates. Plus the European market is still a little challenging, though volume has been holding, which is good in a pretty tough economy.

AC: Is there any overseas market that you have not yet gone into that you would consider to be a potentially profitable area for Victory, or Indian?

SM: Japan is the big one, and it's just a recent development – we took Victory there last March and Indian went in just this year. We go direct to dealers in selling Indian and Victory in Japan, and we've appointed new Victory dealers there and now we're adding new Indian dealers.

The Victory Core is a concept... but that doesn't mean it won't become a reality.

AC: How about South East Asia, where last year Ducati sold more motorcycles in Thailand than in the UK – their third biggest market in Europe! Is Polaris a presence in South East Asia yet?

SM: There's a great opportunity in a lot of different markets that we don't play in currently, and South East Asia is one of them. We need to be there, and our team is working on plans to do that, same as in Brazil, India, China and so on. We're in some of those places, but not yet at the level that we want to be. But we're aware that Harley-Davidson has an extremely successful global distribution, and that's our goal, too.

AC: Most of the European manufacturers have established CKD (Complete Knock Down – parts are imported, then put together in the local country) assembly plants in South East Asia or in South America, especially Brazil, to overcome import duties for fully built up vehicles. Will you do the same?

SM: We are looking at that. We clearly understand the benefits of minimising duties in this way with bikes that are still manufactured in the USA. But as we go forward and expand our motorcycle opportunity we know that there are going to be different ways to go in manufacturing – maybe not with the particular brands that we own right now, so not with the Indian or Victory brands, but maybe with a future brand we might acquire where we look at how that could play as we explore different segments. But I think we will have motorcycle manufacturing outside the US as we grow our overall motorcycle business.

AC: Final question: when can I buy a Victory Core!?

SM: The Core is actually the predesign of what's gone into the Cross models and the Vision and so forth, but everyone wants that Core. "Why don't you guys make that?" is the question I get asked most after whether Indian is going racing. I'm interested in producing it, because it says a lot about the Victory brand from a marketing perspective, so I've got the team looking at doing that. Are we going to build the Core? We're trying really hard to figure out a way...





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PERSONALISATION THE ITALIAN WAY

John Milbank visited Moto Guzzi's factory to see what the historic brand thinks riders should be doing to their bikes.

WORDS: John Milbank PHOTOGRAPHY: Thomas Maccabelli

Gassing the V7 II out of the historic Moto Guzzi factory in Mandello del Lario, northern Italy, it's easy to imagine the development riders taking these same roads around stunning Lake Como. Everything makes sense on the tight, twisty routes – the suspension is comfortable yet stable, and while the £7135 base model bike's 50bhp and 44lb-ft might not be earth shattering, I can't think of a better way to enjoy the views of sheer mountains and vast expanses of crystal-clear water.

Moto Guzzi (I don't need to tell most of you that it's pronounced 'Gootsi', the same way we say 'pizza') had bought three journalists to its factory to stress how important it sees its 'Guzzi Garage' as being for the bike. Francesco Badino, Guzzi's accessory marketing manager admitted that Moto Guzzi is not the first manufacturer to offer a range of accessories for its bike – he acknowledged Harley-Davidson's history in particular – but he did say that "We take our own route".



Guzzi's first ever motorcycle – the GP of 1919.



The Normale was Guzzi's first production bike.

That route is not just about selling a brand new bike, then expecting customers to lash out hundreds, or even thousands, more on parts. Every one of the more than 110 accessories has been designed to fit the V7 right back to 2008. "The real fun," said Badino, "is to be the mechanic working on your own motorcycle. To transfer your soul to your motorcycle."

It's commendable that the company is so keen to see riders keep their older bikes, but it makes sense. Building a commitment to your machine should make you more loyal to the brand. Here at MSL we already know how passionate Guzzi owners are, and if having them invest more of their time, energy and enthusiasm – not to mention money of course – makes them even more keen to preach the values of the brand, then the company is doing the right thing.

There are four packages available for the V7 – Scrambler, Dapper, Legend and Dark Rider. When the Garage was announced, it apparently caused some confusion, with many customers believing the parts had to be used in this way. It's why we were standing in the factory's original development area – in the hope that we would be able to make it clearer that these are just four 'ideas'. Sure, you can buy all the parts for the Legend and fit them yourself – or ask your dealer to do it – to make that bike, but equally, you might want the leather bags of that machine, along with the traditional green paint scheme and high-level exhausts, but you might want the clip-on bars and billet mirrors of the Dapper. That would make a great city bike.

I'd probably be looking at something more brash – the chrome tank and bars of the Dapper with the exhaust and luggage of the Scrambler. It's a shame then that the clever virtual configurator at www.garagemotoguzzi.com only allows you to visualise your choice of parts within each of the four styles. It's not helping the Italians to sell their vision, and while I and the two other journalists lucky enough to have been taken to the factory were excited at the prospect of building our own custom V7, in the end we didn't have time to do much more than tinker with a Scrambler.

It's unfair to criticise Moto Guzzi for this, as it's more a reflection of many launches and press trips; you'll often find the Brits jumping up and down, desperate to get more miles on the bikes, while some other European journalists will be happy to sit for a couple of hours enjoying the wine and food of the region. Us three... well, we agreed that if we'd been told we had to work through the night on a base model V7 II to create anything we wanted, we'd have been more than happy.

Standard customisation

The whole point of the Guzzi Garage is personalisation, but partly due to the confusion over the opportunities the parts catalogue offers, many customers have been asking why the Italians are not offering the four bikes for sale without having to buy a base model, then



replace the parts – in particular the Scrambler – when it makes a very good value bike get too close to the £10,000 price barrier.

Most dealers are encouraged to build an example bike, and incentives are offered to do this. It's quite possible that you could buy one of these machines from your dealer cheaper than if you bought the bike then all the parts. Equally, it's worth talking to your dealer – if you do want to buy a ready-made custom – to see if they'd be willing to effectively 'buy back' your original parts to hold for spares. PCP deals are also able to include the parts, if you do want to buy them that way.

But this isn't what Moto Guzzi wants – it would much prefer customers to invest their time in slowly modifying their bikes. The theory – and it makes sense – is that owners are constantly refreshing their machines, and strengthening their love for them.

When pushed though on whether Moto Guzzi might want to build a machine that cashes in on the enthusiasm for the Scrambler, we were simply told, "It's not impossible that we have something moving on in production after the interest in the Scrambler." Make of that what you will, but expect some interesting announcements at the Milan EICMA show...





Rear suspension had never been seen on a bike before the GT Norge.



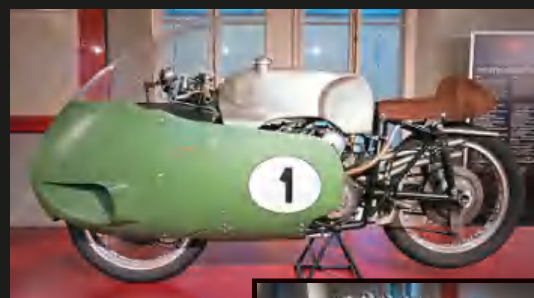
The TT 250 was the first non-British bike to win the IoM TT.



RIGHT: The Tre Cilindri was a supercharged triple capable of 140mph.



The Corsa C4V made Guido Mentasti the first 500cc European Champion.



ABOVE: Otto Cilindri; the 177mph Moto Guzzi V8.



RIGHT: Each cylinder's just 62.3cc.

Which is very telling – one of the guys was a very experienced sports bike tester, and the other was an equally experienced all-rounder who tends to be that magazine's go-to guy when it comes to track launches. Each of us loved the iconic longitudinal V-twin, the classic style and the huge potential. Each of us wanted to make something unique, and saw the quality in the company's parts, and each of us absolutely loved riding them. Guzzi is clearly doing something very right.

The V7 in many way epitomises the wonderful heritage of Moto Guzzi. It's a beautiful machine out of the crate, and it's a wonderful base for whatever you decide to do with it... If that means buying a brand new bike from one of the many UK dealers, or picking up a second-hand one (good luck with that, as residual values tend to stay pretty high), and saving up to be able to afford the next new piece of personalisation every month, then the 100 or so workers at the Mandello factory will be very happy indeed.

AN INCREDIBLE HERITAGE

The Moto Guzzi factory is an amazing place – built in 1921, its got its own wind tunnel (a first for bikes, and which, it's said, used to scavenge power from the town, leaving the locals expecting a race win that weekend), and its own bomb shelter built into the surrounding cliffs. Despite many of the buildings on the vast site now being disused, and the old race track no





The 250 Compressore saw a supercharger fitted to the TT250.



The Monocilindrica was an incredible machine.

longer seeing any action, it's still the longest continuous motorcycle production factory in Europe.

It's also host to the Guzzi museum, which holds 150 bikes, and receives 30,000 visitors every year. If you're ever anywhere near Lake Como, it's very much worth a visit.

In 1919, at the smithy of Mondello blacksmith Giorgio Ripamonti, the first bike was built by Carlo Guzzi, with the financial backing of Giorgio Parodi. Called the GP (Guzzi-Parodi), it led to Moto Guzzi being set up on the March 15, 1921, with work starting on the first production bike – the Normale. Parodi had insisted that the factory only bore Guzzi's name, as Giorgio considered himself the money man, whereas Carlo was the inventor. He also asked that his monetary support be kept a secret, for fear that other entrepreneurs would come looking for cash.

The Normale was a similar layout to Guzzi's first prototype – with the horizontal cylinder and external flywheel – but dropped the GP's four-valve overhead cam design for two opposed valves. The Normale was built from 1921 to 1924, and made 8.5hp at 3400rpm from its 498cc motor – a bike capable of just over 50mph, and one of the first to feature front suspension.

Racing was considered the best way to develop motorcycles, and in 1924 the C4V was the first successful Italian machine in the 500cc class, taking Guido Mentasti to victory as the first European Champion. Making 22hp @ 5500rpm, with a top speed of 93mph, it was too costly for series production, but its success later led to Guzzi producing 486 machines for privateer racers. Moto Guzzi is a company of many records,



Homologation is key

As we reported in the 'Hipsters or heroes?' feature of issue 660, homologation is becoming increasingly important for manufacturers. This isn't just something that affects new machines – in Spain, a bike must be fully homologated, and match its original form to pass the equivalent MoT test. If that spreads further in the EU, it will become increasingly difficult for owners and custom houses to create such unique machines. That's why Yamaha insists that official Yard Built projects do not require any cutting or welding of the bike's frame. It'd be easy to think that an

original-equipment parts catalogue is simply about money, but by guaranteeing every single part is fully homologated for the specific bike, Moto Guzzi is ensuring that its customers will have no problems at all when it comes to the MoT. It also means that everything is fully covered under warranty.

Equally, insurance shouldn't cause any issues; certainly, as long as you're honest with the value of the bike and its accessories, Moto Guzzi's UK insurance partner, Lexham, has no problem covering the most personal of V7s built with official parts.

including building engines in every configuration – single cylinder, transverse and longitudinal twins, supercharged triples, inline fours and even a V8. Another first was the GT Norge, which was the first ever motorcycle to feature rear suspension. Intended for longer distance riding, its 13.2hp @ 3800rpm made it capable of over 60mph.

In 1926 came the TT 250 – the first non-British bike to win the IoM TT. Between 1928 and 1934, an SS version of the TT machine, which made 18hp @ 6000rpm and reached 87mph, was built with an electrical lighting system.

BELOW: The four official customs – designed to inspire purchasers – outside the iconic factory gate.



Dark Rider – a matt-black V7 II sure to appeal to many Guzzi buyers.

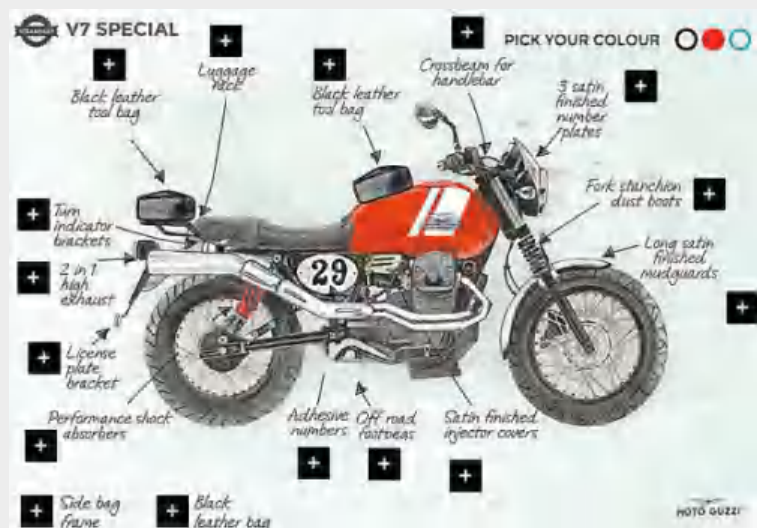


Extending the Garage

The Guzzi Garage is about creativity and having fun, but it's also "a concept that sees the start of a process what will develop further for Moto Guzzi". Whether that means a similar treatment for bikes like the California, Nevada, Audace or others we don't yet know, but it's also something that in another form we may see working elsewhere within the Piaggio Group.

When asked if there might be an Aprilia Garage, Francesco Badino told me; "Yes – we started it from another side. For Aprilia that is really racing orientated... we started working on the

Workshop project. That means that more than the accessories for the bike that we have already developed; getting info from the race team, MotoGP and so on, we started working on having a point of [contact for] the user. So not starting from the product, but starting from the service that this guy can give to the end user. It's a project that we are going to [complete] at the end of this year, so we really hope that for 2016 we will contact the best racing workshop to be part of this family, and start developing a better service and racing customising service for the end user."



Then Guzzi fitted a Cozette supercharger to the TT 250, helping Nello Pagani set seven new world records at Monza. In 1939, this incredible machine hit 213.270kmh (132.352mph).

The Tre Cilindri was designed to compete with other supercharged bikes in the 500 class, and made 65hp @ 8000rpm. Shortly after the war, supercharged motorcycles were disqualified from racing, but the bike had been capable of hitting over 140mph.

In 1952, Moto Guzzi released the Galletto 175; this 7hp machine, named after the Italian for cockerel, offered the handling of a motorcycle at up to 54mph. The incredible performance of the 1956 350 Monocilindrica saw a 349.2cc four-stroke single make 37hp @ 8000rpm, and reach 140mph. Surely most staggering though is the beautiful engine of the 1955-1957 Otto Cilindri. This 498.7cc 90° V8 four-stroke produced 72hp @ 12,500 at the rear wheel (imagine the sound!), enabling the bike to hit 177mph.

Moto Guzzi staff are sure the 1959 Lodolo Regularita' was the first ever scrambler, but for more serious off-road work there was 1952's Superalce, which had handlebars for the pillion to hang onto and a sprung, hinged frame. Going further off-piste? The Cicogna was built with skis on the side for the police in Finland (they didn't buy it), and the Autoveicolo Da Montagna was a three-wheel-drive military trike with the longitudinal V-twin so iconic to Guzzi now. The engine found its way there after the it was first developed – and turned down for being too expensive – by Moto Guzzi for Fiat to use in the Cinquecento.

There's an incredible heritage with Moto Guzzi, and it's clear why so many bikers are so passionate about the brand. As the range of machines and accessories continue to grow, and the general hunger for customisation keeps accelerating, it looks like some of that space at the Mandello factory will be needed for many more historic machines in the future...

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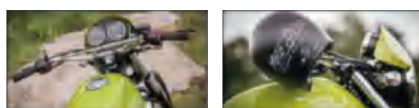
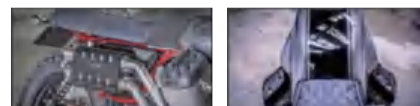
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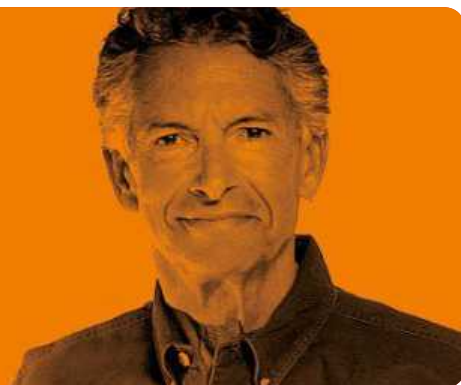
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Losing a little off the fastball

Maynard Hershon



Maynard's worried he's not got the riding edge that he used to have...

In August each year here in Colorado, a major multi-day bicycle race criss-crosses the mountains. This year I volunteered to work on my motorcycle for the women's event, more specifically the women's road race. I was to 'drive,' as bicycle race jargon would have it, the 'time-board motor' in that 58-mile event.

The bicycle race time-board is much like the motorcycle race pit board, but with bicycle road races the board travels with the race.

My job would be to carry a passenger equipped with a race radio, a signboard and marker pens. We'd ride a few hundred yards in front of the race. When a breakaway escaped from the pack of racers and gained a minimum of a minute, my passenger would hear on the race radio the race numbers of the women in the breakaway, and the time gap the breakaway had in front of the pack. She'd write all that on the board.

We'd find a place alongside the road, wait for the breakaway riders, ride out next to them and show them the board. Then we'd wait for the pack and ride alongside so those racers could see the board. Then we'd jet forward and wait for the time gap to change... and do it again.

I've been doing bicycle race work for decades and I'm used to sharing the road with large groups of cyclists who'd probably rather I wasn't there. The cyclists use the entire (closed) road, curb to curb, and they swing back and forth across the road to straighten the corners. So positioning oneself on the motorcycle is crucial.

There have been a couple of recent collisions between race support motorcycles and racers that made worldwide headlines. I'd rather keep my name out of the news, if it's all the same to you.

I noted, as I rode the mostly crowned roads between Loveland, Colorado, and Fort Collins that I was not displaying my usual effortless mastery (cough, cough) of my motorcycle. True, my young lady passenger was unfamiliar to me, but she had arrived at the race start on her husband's motorcycle. All her gear was her own. It was by no means her first rodeo.

And, undeniably, it was windy. Maybe wind gusts were knocking the motorcycle around a little, so that I often had to make minor corrections to stay placed correctly on the road. And I couldn't just 'think' the corrections. I had to muscle the bars a bit. I was fighting with my bike. I'd checked the tyres and adjusted the rear shocks in anticipation of a passenger. I didn't want to believe that there was something wrong with my motorcycle. But the alternative explanation?!

I'm getting old. Not old chronologically. I've been calendar old for years. But old in the sense of losing something I've had for decades. Maybe I'm not the rider I was, even just a few years ago. Some decline must be inevitable, right? I don't ride as fast as I used to, no doubt. But I no longer feel the need to ride fast. Maybe I still could... maybe. It isn't lack of speed that concerns me; it's losing the precision: steering the bike into the corner and riding as if on rails all the way around. No corrections.

It's never having to force or coax the motorcycle to do anything. It's never making my passenger nervous or causing her to bang her helmet against mine as we slow down. It's the seamless control that says yes, as a matter of fact I HAVE been riding for 100 years. I'm SO flattered that you noticed.

Twice during the race, both times on long, twisty descents and after a moment's inattention, the lead women almost caught us. I had to ride as hard as I could down the winding road to stay out of their way. I was unable to take time to roll the throttle off and back on for the corners so as not to upset the motorcycle.

I had to ride on and off the brakes, and I did not do it well. I'd be pointed into the corner, hard on the brakes, and have to get off the brakes, around the corner and back on the gas to stay in front of the hard-charging women. That was too many tasks on what was feeling like an off-day.

When I got home, I worried about how poorly I'd ridden. I suspected that my passenger could tell I wasn't in seamless control. I thought that my normal riding would continue to be fine, but that I should avoid stressful environments like bicycle racing... in which I had thrived for years. I was still hoping for an out, another explanation for my uneasy riding.

When I saw my motorcycle mechanic at our Thursday evening club meeting, I asked him how you tell if your steering head bearings are worn out.

On crowned roads, he said, and described how the bearings, notched in the straight-ahead position, interfere with smooth steering. How they can make you feel a bit... rattled.

"How many miles you got on that thing?" he asked. "Forty-three thousand," I said. "Those bearings are trashed," he said. "Probably been bad a long time."

Maybe... I'm not getting old as fast as I feared. Maybe new head bearings will make me young again. Wish me luck!

Who is Hershon?

MSL's Maynard is our man with a very unique view on motorcycling from both sides of the pond. Yes, he is American, yes, he does ride around on a second-hand Kawasaki that causes him grief... and yes, he does have his finger right on the pulse of life on two wheels

TOURING

Your rides ♦ Our rides ♦ Tips and tricks

Globetrotting on a Bonneville

Dutch-Australian family now on the last leg of a round-the-world ride

In December 2012, Aad and Jeanette Schram, together with their son Mike, sold their house in Tasmania to set off on a round-the-world trip. Not so unusual these days, except that the Schrams were each on a Bonneville T100, and that Mike (riding an XT660) was just 16 when they left.

"Triumph Australia said the Bonneville would never make it up the Dalton Highway," wrote Aad on their blog. "It did. It also did the Top of the World Highway, Canyonlands' Potash road, Monument Valley and the coastal road in Belize. We took it through Mexico and Central America... It has had to run on all sorts of oil filters, all sorts of oil and plenty of fuel of dubious quality. Some of it was so bad we couldn't even get our Coleman stove to burn on it.

"The Yamaha is more sensitive to fuel quality and lets us know it's unhappy by rough running, but the Triumph just rumbles on."

The only drawback of the Bonneville seems to have been a lack of ground clearance and suspension movement compared to the XT, especially on Jeanette's lower SE version. The route, which has covered



Mother and son, New Zealand – they've a long way to go...

over 60,000 miles and taken in 54 countries, avoided Africa and South America, but took in plenty of mud, sand and gravel roads. They set off in December 2012 and rode through New Zealand before shipping the bikes to Canada and heading up to Yukon and Alaska then south again into the USA then down to Mexico and central America.

Next they shipped the XT and Triumphs to Europe. After the wide open spaces they'd been through, Mike likened the ride from the Channel Tunnel to the New Forest to, "riding through a giant city," though they did like the scenery, and took the opportunity to visit the Norton

factory and Yorkshire-based Alt-Berg boots. The long ride up to Nordkapp followed, then back down to Spain and France. Sadly, at this point, after two years on the road, Jeanette decided to leave the rest of the trip to her husband and son.

Aad said they had thought of giving up, partly due to financial concerns, but carried on, riding east to the Black Sea, then through the 'Stans this August and September. There have been several low speed offs, but in Kyrgyzstan an oncoming car appeared on the wrong side of the road and swiped Mike's nearside pannier. He stayed on and the car suffered a ripped



Surprisingly, the Bonneville proved as adapt at overlanding as the XT.



Valley of the Gods, Utah.

front tyre and other damage.

The driver and his friends demanded money (despite it being their fault) and the police threatened to impound both car and bike, unless Mike and Aad rode off without making any claims. So that's what they did.

They managed a few days in China and on October 5, they crossed into Pakistan and as we went to press they were resting in Agra, India, where Mike was recovering from a spider bite. If all goes to plan, they'll visit Nepal before riding down through South East Asia and back to Oz.

Follow their journey at earth-roamers.blogspot.co.uk



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The real tools of the trade

Richard Millington



We started with a list of jobs that we were likely to need to undertake and a list of bikes we were likely to need to do them on. Primarily the bikes are BMWs and you'll notice a preponderance

of Torx fittings for this reason. Top of the list is bulb replacements, tightening up loose bits and gaffer taping things back together, but our kit also equips us for the following: punctures – tubed and tubeless; wheel removal; replacing incorrect fuel – including from injection system; adjusting chains; replacing brake pads; replacing/cleaning air filters; removing batteries; de-drowning and repairing cracked casings.

Now some of the jobs and tools are quite specific to the role of a tour leader, and some are far more relevant to adventure travel. You wouldn't need to carry three different sized plug sockets or a universal internal hex drive for all four sizes of BMW front axle. You probably won't be planning on de-drowning a bike. Oh, by de-drowning I don't mean flooding it on start up, I mean dropping it in a river and filling the engine with water!

The most common problems – punctures and cracked casings – can apply anywhere; how you choose to deal with them relates to where you are. If you've dropped your GS in the car park of your local BMW dealer and cracked the rocker cover then you're going to let them deal with it. If you're in Chicken, Alaska, and the nearest dealer is four hours away, then you need to fix it yourself.

The sizes of spanners and sockets will be personal to your own bike but here's our list of other essentials...

- Duct tape: Get one of the small rolls that pack easily.
- Cable ties: Long and strong. Like duct tape they are the bodger's temporary repair nirvana. You can even stitch plastic panels back together with them.
- Clear fuel hose: Lets you syphon fuel either because you've used the wrong pump or more commonly because someone has run out. Why clear? So you can see the fuel coming up the hose and don't get a mouthful!
- Insulation tape: Another essential for all roadside repairs.
- Mini compressor: We don't carry CO2 canisters;

Last month Richard explored the logic of what tools to take touring. This is what he packs for an adventure...



the average canister will inflate your tyre to 7-12 psi. You need two to three to re-inflate a tyre, only then to find out that you haven't fixed the puncture and the air has all leaked out. A compressor gives you a never-ending supply of air.

■ Liquid metal/epoxy putty: A putty that can be shaped and moulded to fill holes, repair cracks or even plug leaking radiators. When it sets it goes rock hard. Great stuff but when using it to repair cracked cases

you always need to know the answer to "where is the bit of metal that is missing?" If it's lying on the road, fine, but if it is lodged in the engine, then you must get it out. If you don't it could be catastrophic!

- Multi-use pliers: Long nosed, with cutters and an internal gripping surface that can be used as an adjustable grip.
- Stubby tyre levers: You don't need lots of leverage so stubby levers are fine. Keep the little plastic rim shield they normally come with as well; it's far too easy to scratch your wheels without it. We take three levers – you can do it with two but three make it a lot easier.
- Adjustable spanner: Mechanics the world over break into a cold sweat when you mention an adjustable spanner but on the road is where it comes into its own. One size fits almost all.
- Puncture repair kit: Everyone has a preference. There is an advantage if you have tubeless tyres of using one of the glue-less systems. So many times people pop the puncture repair kit under their seat but when they need it three years later they find the glue has gone hard. The most important thing is to practice on an old tyre or tube. The side of the road in the rain is not the place to start reading the instructions and learning the technique. And that's it – add the right spanners and sockets for your bike and you have a decent kit. But remember – when you've bought all the nice shiny tools, learn how to use them, or leave them at home.

Who is Millington?

Richard Millington has been riding for more than 30 years, touring for more than 25, and has never looked back. He's the founder of Motorrad Tours, and has ridden on five continents, guiding motorcycle tours in Europe, Africa and North and South America. www.motorrad-tours.com offers a wide range of adventures, with something for every rider...



Five minutes with... JEREMY KROEKER

WORDS: Peter Henshaw

Age: 41

Job: Driver, writer, publisher

Destination: Iran, Syria

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

Rocky Mountains in the town of Canmore, Alberta, Canada – it's where I live.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR BIKES.

I have two. One is a 2010 Kawasaki KLR 650. I love the KLR – I have owned three of them – but this one is a bit of a headache. It burns so much oil that I'm measurably responsible for the boom in Alberta's oil sand industry. That said, problems with the KLR are rare and they generally don't cost much to fix. This bike has taken me down so many gravel roads to clear mountain lakes in British Columbia. I can't complain... even though it burns oil.

My other bike is a 1982 Honda CB 750 Custom that I bought when I was 19. I sold it to my dad after a few years and he rode it all over Canada and the United States before parking it behind the shed when he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. The bike sat outside in the Canadian weather for seven years.

When my dad passed away, the bike returned to me and I'm in the process of having it restored. I rode it to California and back this summer, but it still needs a lot of

work – it took me 20 minutes every morning to start it and, like my KLR, it burns oil. I may sell the Kawasaki, but I'll have the Honda fixed and I'll ride it until I die.

WHAT WAS YOUR BIG TRIP?

Every trip seems like a big one, but I've done two trips that stand out. In 2003 I rode a 2001 KLR 650 from Canada to Panama and back. Then in 2008 I rode another KLR through Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. So far I've covered nearly 30 countries with one motorcycle or another.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TRIP?

The highlight of the Middle East trip was when I finally made it into Iran, after all the paperwork issues. I found the people to be very helpful and welcoming. I was secretly shepherded into the holiest shrine in Iran by a devout believer. The site is off-limits to non-Muslims, but this man could not accept that. Given my background (raised in a fundamental Christian community), that experience had a significant impact on me. There was fear. There was fascination. And there was an opportunity to rethink religion from another vantage point. It's easy to dismiss the beliefs of other cultures and religions. In that shrine, I had to confront my own presuppositions and it was a healthy experience.



ANY LOW POINTS?

I'm a terrible mechanic. At one point my KLR suffered from a dangerous wobble at the front end and almost everyone on earth (except for me) could have quickly diagnosed and fixed the problem. I assumed it was a complicated issue with the forks, but it turned out to just be a loose steering head bearing that I tolerated for thousands of kilometres.

BUY THE BOOKS

Motorcycle Therapy is the story of Jeremy's trip from Canada to Panama, also available as an audiobook. Through Dust and Darkness recalls his journey through the Middle East. Available nearly everywhere, distributed by Heritage Group Distribution.
www.motorcycletherapy.com





JETS & DISTILLERIES

Bet you didn't know that Norfolk has its own whisky distillery... Glendon Franklin tells how to get there.

WORDS & PICTURES: **Glendon Franklin**

Watton is not the centre of the universe but it is a very central point to meet for a bike ride.

There's an excellent bike dealership (Lings Triumph) and many good, cheap cafes serving hearty biker fare. Having rendezvoused, lusted after gorgeous machinery and eaten your fill, you will be ready to ride this lovely, interesting route.

Start by heading down the A1075 towards Thetford, fuel up just past Tesco, then just after Stow Bedon take the B1111 on the left, which heads towards East Harling. This is a great piece of Tarmac with some interesting bends and lovely scenery. It's possible to go quite quickly, but as with all the roads on this route, take care – rural hazards vary through the year, from tractors towing trailers to massive combine harvesters. In the tree-lined sections it's not possible to predict what may be round the next bend.

You'll come to England's first and only whisky distillery – St Georges – just after passing under the A11. There's a cafe, and they do tours, but for the moment, make a mental note and ride on to East Harling – at the end of your ride it will be very easy to return here for essential supplies.



TOP: The English Whisky Co – with apologies to readers north of the Tweed.

ABOVE: A time-expired Buccaneer guards the gate at RAF Honington.





The whole route is a mix of curves and long straights, which means overtakes are never a major issue and traffic is almost nonexistent anyway. Every time I ride this road I pause, just to savour the lack of noise, pollution and traffic (apart from the pig farms, obviously). Beyond East Harling, a pretty little town, there's a fantastic long downhill straight but be careful – at a glance it goes straight up the other side of the valley, but in reality it takes an 80-degree left to another long straight.

The B1111 leads you to Garboldisham and a staggered crossroads before finally meeting (a few villages further on) the A143. There can be serious traffic here, but turn right towards Bury St Edmunds and the roundabout three miles down the road, then turn right onto the A1088. This is a truly magnificent road both in terms of scenery and Tarmac, and worth riding in full any time. But for this route, turn left at Honington, following signs to the RAF base. This used to be a main V bomber base, and later home to Buccaneers, one of which acts as a gate guardian. Today there are no fast jets as it's the HQ for the RAF Regiment, which gets to play with guided missiles and fierce dogs.

LOWER THE TONE

Continue calmly past the base – the guards are friendly but fully armed Gurkhas. Eventually, after some nice quick Tarmac, you will reach the A134. Turn right towards Thetford. The police know how quick this road can be, so be sensible. Through Thetford, follow signs to Brandon and the B1107. Again, this road looks quick but this time there's an ever-present danger of dopey deer crossing the road without warning. If you like riverside picnic sites, take a detour on the right down to Santon Downham and the River Little Ouse, which is idyllic on a summer's day. Otherwise, carry on through Brandon, where you could stop for coffee and a leg stretch, or turn right onto the A1065 and head to the Mundford roundabout. Here you can lower the tone at Browns, a rather nice café and restaurant favoured by our lycra-clad cousins.

At Mundford, rejoin the A134, signed to King's Lynn. This road skirts the Fens and has a different feel to the rest of the ride, being much more open. It sometimes has queues of lorries but this isn't a

ABOVE LEFT: Swaffham bandstand, a perfect place to stop for a cuppa.

ABOVE RIGHT: Tempting humpty road through Brandon Forest.

problem on a bike as there's plenty of room for overtakes, and once past the queue the road ahead should be empty.

Shortly after Stradsett and the A1122 crossing, look for an unclassified road on the right, signed to Shouldham Thorpe. It's not obvious, but if you miss it take the next turn off to Shouldham. Miss the third turn off, also to Shouldham, and you're on your own! Continue through Shouldham, which is a pretty little village with a nice-looking pub, and carry on to Marham. Once in Marham follow the signs to RAF Marham, home to our Tornado bombers, one of which is the gate guard (you may have spotted a theme here).

Once past the base, follow signs to Narborough, which will eventually lead to a T-junction. Turn right, following signs to Swaffham. In the town centre turn right on the A1065, signed to Thetford. If you pass the market place, which has parking and a bandstand, then you're on the right track. This is a good place to park up and take a break, explore the beautiful church, visit the museum and refuel at one of the many cafes – there's also a Russian restaurant that I believe is very good. If you're lucky, a local may tell you the story of the pedlar of Swaffham, who features on the town sign.

Leave Swaffham on the A1065 for Thetford and about seven miles out take the B1108 signed to Watton on your left. This is a superb road and an excellent way to end your ride, back to the start point at Watton.

If you're still not ready to go home, ride west to Norwich, south to the A11 (and St Georges distillery) or north to Dereham. Or you could just turn round and go back down the B1108, turn left and head for Thetford because that's a grand ride too!

Write about your adventure

You don't need to be a professional journalist or photographer, just give a sense of where you've been and why other MSL readers might enjoy the same trip.

We're looking for the following: Day Ride – favourite day or half-day ride local to you – (1000 words); Mid Ride – a week or two in Europe (1400 words); Big Ride – anything more adventurous or further afield – (1800 words).

We'll need a selection of good, high-resolution pictures – at least 1Mb each. When your story is published, you'll receive a free 12-month subscription to MSL. Submissions or questions to: msltravel@yahoo.co.uk

EUROPE ON A BUDGET

Is it really possible to tour Europe on less than £50 a day? Neil Windsor and Chris Ebbs did...

WORDS & PICTURES **Ne Windsor**

Watching overland videos on YouTube and reading the latest travel book is all very well, but the reality for most of us is a two-week trip, often on a tight budget. It can still be an adventure though, and it won't involve remortgaging the house. That got me thinking about Europe – perfect for a two-week tour as it's right on our doorstep, and hassle-free. Stuff a wad of Euros in your pocket, make minimal plans, and you're away. And by camping, and shopping at Aldi and Lidl, it should be possible to do it on minimal money.

As the date for leaving loomed, I roped in good friend Christopher Ebbs. We had a rough sort of itinerary, including Auschwitz in Poland, Lake Garda in Italy, the Millau Viaduct and the village of Oradour-Sur-Glane in France. But we didn't book anything apart from the Channel Tunnel crossing – no campsites were booked, no back-up hotels, just ride each day to a chosen destination and let things fall into place. Or that was the idea.

The only areas to which we paid meticulous attention were our bikes and kit. My trusted 2014 Super Tenere was dressed in ARD aluminium boxes, a Garmin 660 satnav and a quickly removable tank bag for valuables. Chris was on his well maintained 2001 Kawasaki ZX6, wearing (the bike, not Chris) a set of Givi cases and topbox mounted on a heavily modified Givi frame originally intended for a TDM900.

Mobile phone and credit cards were also worth



RIGHT: Early morning and Mr Hippo's got a hangover.



checking. A quick scan of the internet allowed me to pick up a Euro-specific card, which gave the best exchange rate with no commission fees. As for the phone, calling my network provider confirmed I had a good tariff that was valid from mainland Europe, so I could use it for calls and the internet without having to pick up a hernia-inducing bill when I got home.

WET START

A last Sunday lunch with my family was all very relaxed as all Chris and I had to do was make our 3.30pm tunnel booking, which would give plenty of time to finish packing and say our goodbyes. Or it was until my carefree attitude came up and tapped me on the shoulder, reminding me I was nowhere near ready, with my luggage still strewn across the living room floor! Luckily, the ARD cases were big enough for me to cram everything in without major strategic planning. So with boxes packed and the tent securely fastened to the lids I was only running half an hour late. As soon as Chris turned up, we could shoot straight off.

He turned up all right, but he was shaking his head and pointing at the front of his bike. Once I got the answer from the game of charades we were playing while wearing earplugs and helmets, it turned out his brakes needed some attention. The seals were sticking, but an hour later we had the problem solved and were away, but knowing we weren't going to make our time slot for the crossing. And we did have an aim in mind, wanting to reach Ypres in time for the evening memorial ceremony at Menin Gate. Fortunately, the tunnel let us through on a later slot, and with 20 minutes to spare we rolled into town, watched the ceremony (which they hold every night, 365 days a year), then found a campsite and settled our minds into our trip.

It rained for the next two days and as if that wasn't bad enough we couldn't ride the Nürburgring, which was closed for maintenance. So we decided to battle



TOP LEFT: Camping kept the cost down and the sites were easy to find.

TOP RIGHT: The ARDcase-equipped Super Ten carried piles of stuff.

ABOVE MIDDLE: Sophisticated Euro cuisine means using a baguette for your breakfast butty.

RIGHT MIDDLE: You meet the nicest people on a European campsite.

ABOVE RIGHT: Military cemetery, Etaples.

BELOW: Snaking roads and rivers through the Italian countryside.



the elements and make quick progress through Germany on the autobahns to Prague. We stopped along the way, credit card in hand, to buy a Sena headset unit at Louis (a large motorcycle accessory retailer) to replace the failing interphone unit I was using to communicate with Chris. With the new Sena now paired to Chris's interphone we pressed on towards the border.

It was still raining as we set up camp on the outskirts of Katowice, ready for a day off the bikes and a visit to the well-documented Auschwitz. So far, this trip had included plenty of wet riding but none of the twisty roads or beautiful weather we'd been promising ourselves. But finally, as we turned south into Slovakia,





Hungary, Austria and Slovenia, it did, and crossing the border into Italy certainly delivered the Promised Land. Riding the mountain passes with clear blue skies above, greeting other bikers who were clearly having just as much fun, was just the tonic we needed.

We hairpinned down to Lake Garda, and with the air temperature at 36°C we wasted no time in donning our shorts and diving into the cool water. The lake is beautiful – set in stunning mountainous surroundings – and a bit of a tourist hot spot, so finding somewhere to stay didn't pose a problem. In fact, things just got better and better as we headed further south towards Monaco, and a run along the Mediterranean coastline. We'd got into a nice daily routine of plotting our next target, packing the tent, cooking up some porridge and a stout cup of coffee on the Jetboil gas stove before heading off. We were getting used to covering the miles as well, and would now discuss a 400-mile day as if we were popping to the shops. Of course, riding the bikes along Europe's southern coastline meant this



TOP LEFT: The boys tick off another country – they managed 10.

ABOVE: A cliff-top village of Saint-Cirq-Lapopie in south-western France.

RIGHT: Where the other half live... Monaco.



ABOVE: These two toured Europe on less than £50 a day and so could you.

LEFT: Auschwitz was a sobering experience.

wasn't exactly a hardship, and we wanted to take in as much as we could in the time left. We tried to limit our photo stops – with such beautiful scenery we were running out of SD card space.

It was day 10 that we finally pointed the bikes north for the long trek home. I say a 'trek' but it wasn't in the least bit boring, and we indulged ourselves like children in a sweetshop, traversing the Midi-Pyrenees. The bikes didn't seem quite so happy – whether it was the fact we were heading for home, or the 46°C temperature, I'm not sure.

I still had a pocket full of Euros as the credit card had come into play for everything, purely because it was so easy. Nearly all the filling stations we stopped at for fuel accepted the card directly at the pump, while toll fees were quickly dispensed with by sticking the card in the machine at the booth. Any concerns we had about language barriers and struggling for fuel were long forgotten by now – Europe is just so easy to travel around.

With the terrain flattening out as we travelled north through France, the realisation began to set in that we would soon be back into the daily routine. But even though this had only been a short 13-day trip, I felt as if I'd settled into a new routine, living on the bike and absorbing everything around me.

When we finally rolled up at home, the odometer revealed we had covered 3950 miles. Add that to the 10 countries we visited and the knowledge we had gained, and I think my £600 spend was an absolute bargain.

What are you waiting for? Book your crossing, grab your passport and have an adventure.

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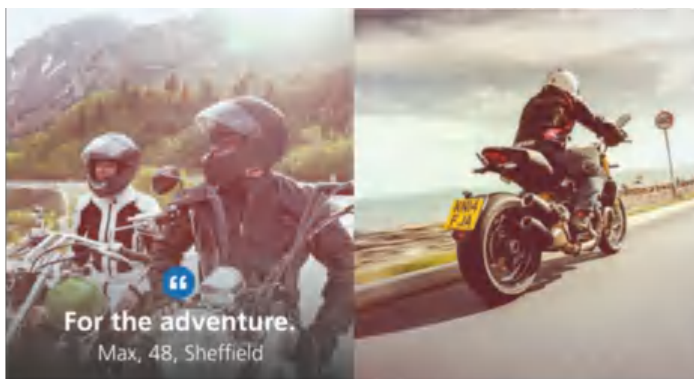
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IN SEARCH OF BURT

In part one last month, Chris Finch and friends escaped to New Zealand hiring a pair of Triumphs. Their journey ends in Queenstown...

WORDS AND PICTURES: **Chris Finch**



It had been a good couple of weeks. From Auckland, we'd travelled north, ridden the Pacific Coast Highway and Thermal Explorer Highway, then crossed to South Island (a three-hour ferry ride), seen the Pancake Rocks, Southern Alps and Franz Joseph Glacier.

We continued south over the Crown Range of mountains, which lies between Cardrona and Queenstown, heading to New Zealand's southernmost city of Invercargill. At 1121m, the road over the range is the highest main route in New Zealand. From the summit of Crown Terrace, there are fabulous views down to Arrowtown in the Arrow Valley and across to The Remarkables range. Despite the bright early morning sunshine, it was quite cold in the mountains as we rode in and out of bright sunshine and dark shadows while cranking around this wonderful twisty road, which zigzags down to Lake Hayes.

With the soaring, jagged peaks of The Remarkables on our left, and the shore of Lake Wakatipu on our right, we rode on through motorcycling nirvana to a lake-side coffee stop near Garston. We met a Swedish couple there (also touring on a Triumph Explorer) who had just come up from Invercargill. More to the point, they'd visited the E Hayes hardware store in the city, where Burt Munro's World's Fastest Indian is on display.

None of us needed a second prompting, carrying on down to Invercargill and straight into the city centre where, luckily, I happened to spot the store. It really

is a hardware shop, but among the counters full of tools and hardware goods is an amazing and varied display of over 100 classic and vintage motorcycles, automobiles, engines, equipment and memorabilia that make up the E Hayes Motorworks Collection. We trawled our way through the exhibits until we came to Burt Munro's bike, ensconced in a large glass case.

If you don't know the Burt Munro story, it's well worth reading up on (not to mention the film *World's Fastest Indian*, starring Anthony Hopkins).

ABOVE: It really is the land of the long white cloud.

BELOW: There's plenty of this in NZ - this one's through the mountains of Westland National Park.





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ABOVE: Swing bridge over the Hokitika River Gorge, South Island.



RIGHT: Careful where you park... unprotected drop over the Haast Pass in the Southern Alps.



Born near Invercargill, Herbert 'Burt' James Munro bought a standard Indian Scout in 1920, with its 600cc side-valve V-twin and a top speed of around 60mph. Over the next 42 years he carried out extensive modifications in his quest for maximum speed.

On his first trip to Bonneville Speed Week with the Indian in 1962 Burt achieved 179mph, something that spectators found absolutely unbelievable considering the age of both the bike and its rider. He went back five years later and claimed the World Record Class S-A 1000cc – with an average speed of 183.586mph (one way 190.07mph). It still stands.

PINING FOR FJORDS

Having paid homage to Burt, we left Invercargill heading west and along the south coast where we caught sight of the southern ocean, with seas rolling in all the way from Antarctica. We continued along the Southern Scenic Route – a superb signed road around the southern tip of the South Island, taking in the Catlins mountains and some stunning views. My first concern was the fierce, blustery westerly winds that made for interesting two-up riding for the next 50 miles to our accommodation at Te Anau.

BELOW: Empty roads, glorious scenery, and yes, they drive on the left.



We set off early next morning to avoid coach traffic that can build up on the 200-mile round trip to Milford Sound. That was just on the limit of the Explorer's range, and we knew there wouldn't be any fuel available once we left Te Anau, so we brimmed the tanks there. Both tactics worked, as we didn't run out of fuel or meet any coaches. In fact, for the first 60-mile stretch to the Homer Tunnel I saw only two vehicles on my side of the road. One of those was a police car and the other was the car that he had just pulled over! At the tunnel exit, a panoramic view of the Cleddau Valley and the mountains of Sheerdown Range made a perfect backdrop to accompany our fabulous, twisting ride downhill through The Chasm to the end of the road at Milford Sound, where we made our way to the quayside to board the 'Milford Sovereign' for a cruise along the Sound.

Hailed by Rudyard Kipling as the eighth wonder of the world, the breathtaking Milford Sound is the star of the glacier-carved Fjordland National Park, where the surrounding rock faces rise steeply for 1200m or more on either side. If you get the chance, go and see it. Cruise over, we rode all the way back to Te Anau and happily the road was deserted once again.



We were very aware that our trip was coming to an end, so we selected a longer than necessary 220-mile ride to Queenstown. This would take us south-east on a detour across the windy Waimea Plains of Southland and then north via a minor road through a fertile valley to the east of the Umbrella Mountains, to Ettrick. From there we would ride north through Alexandra to Cromwell and then east to Queenstown.

We had used about 30 miles-worth of fuel since the previous top-up and reckoned that we would fill up again after about 65 miles, where we knew there was a filling station. But when we arrived it was closed, and despite card-operated pumps, we could not find the credit card terminal. From my notes I knew that the next opportunity to fill up would be Alexandra, another 90 miles down the road and we'd be pretty low on fuel by the time we got there. In theory, we would still have about 20 miles in hand, but just to be sure, after turning onto minor roads at Riversdale, we switched to economy mode.

Stopping at the tiny hamlet of Heriot for a coffee there was nowhere open, but a local resident spotted our plight and within minutes he had invited us into his house. He also assured us that there would be fuel at Roxburgh, 20 miles short of Alexandra, and he was right. We carried on west towards Queenstown and passed the world famous AJ Hackett Bridge, home of

ABOVE: The Lake District on steroids... on the road to Cardrona, South Island.

TOP RIGHT: Cardrona Hotel was built at the peak of the 1860s gold rush.

RIGHT: If you get chilly in NZ's January summer, there's an open fire in this hotel garden.

BOTTOM LEFT: The World's Fastest Indian lives! Spotted at a hardware store in Invercargill.

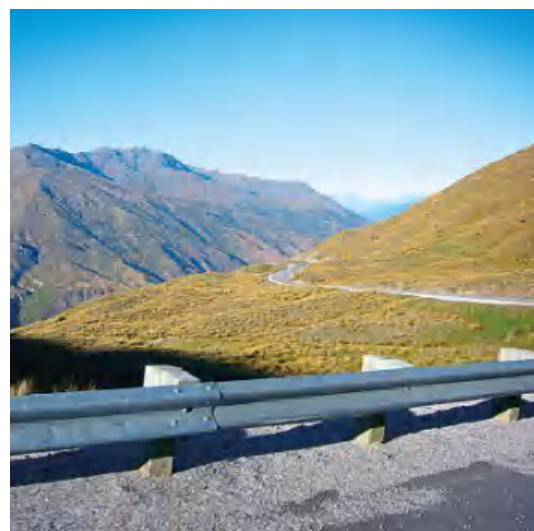
BOTTOM RIGHT: Early morning sunshine over the Crown Range from Highway 89.

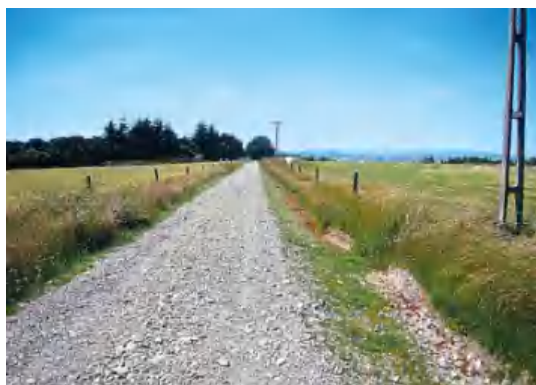
the world's first 300ft bungee jump. We made a short detour at Arrow Junction into Arrowtown, one of the most picturesque settlements in New Zealand. It sits alongside the gold-bearing Arrow River and was established in 1862, during the height of the Otago gold rush.

The settlement grew quickly as pioneers constructed cottages, shops, hotels and churches, more than 60 of which can still be seen today. We walked around this once lusty gold boom town, enjoying the leafy avenues of trees planted by miners a century ago.

Then it was back to the gorge, along a splendid winding road that rose and fell through the rocky defile, past Coronet Peak and over the Shotover River at Arthur's Point for the final 10 miles into Queenstown. We stopped again (it's difficult to ride far in New Zealand without stopping to look at something) and headed to the Shotover River Canyon.

The big attraction here is a jet boat ride, which of course we had to do – it was an adrenalin-fuelled rush, speeding among the rocks at the base of the steep





canyon walls on the narrow Shotover River. The pilots are required to have 120-hours' experience on jet boats before they can take passengers and their skill level was clear. Which was good to know.

SURVIVAL TOWN

After all that canyon carving it was time to hit the mountains again, and we climbed away from Queenstown over the 971m Lindis Pass across the St Bathans Range to Omarama, where the landscape comprises mostly of treeless upland pasture of tussock grass. It is rugged up here and largely deserted because of the very cold winter climate.

We passed through Twizel, a new town built in 1968 to house construction workers on the Upper Waitaki Hydroelectric Scheme. The original intention was for the town to revert to farmland once the project finished, but on completion in 1983 the residents successfully fought to save the town itself. Some say that it would have been kinder to have bulldozed the place flat, as was the original plan...

On the last riding day of our trip we headed north on Highway 8, past Lake Pukaki and Lake Tekapo and then through scenery reminiscent of North Wales as we climbed to 709m over the Burke Pass and down to



ABOVE LEFT: Four miles of gravel road, then this loose surfaced drive to a farm stay near Te Anau.

ABOVE: Gemstone Beach near Invercargill, and nothing but sea between here and the Antarctic.

BELOW: Milford Sound is New Zealand's very own fjord.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Jetboat pilots need 120 hours of experience before doing this – just as well...

the small town of Fairlie on the junction with Highway 79. We followed that road through the pretty town of Geraldine, before heading north on the Inland Scenic Route, which took us through hamlets with names like Arundel and Mayfield (no prizes for guessing where the original English settlers came from), eventually continuing into the city of Christchurch.

Somewhere along that Inland Scenic Route we came up behind cattle being herded along the road by four or five guys on trail bikes, who were doing a grand job until an oncoming lorry decided not to stop. Instead, it pulled over onto our side of the road and continued past the cows, scattering them all over the place.

The riders quickly herded them into a loose column and the traffic warning vehicle at the back of the group waved me past to take up station alongside the herd to help keep it on the right side of the road! It's probably safe to say that this was the first time a Triumph Explorer has been used for herding cattle...

As a biking destination, New Zealand is hard to beat. The fabulous biking roads had been virtually empty for the whole of the 2750 miles we rode, and from the Bay of Islands on North Island to Milford Sound on South Island, the scenery had been varied and awesome.

Then toss in three weeks of sunny weather with temperatures of 26-27°C in early January... Give it a go – you'll be glad you did.



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CLUB FOCUS

Vintage Japanese Motorcycle Club

HOW DID THE CLUB START?

The club was founded in 1982 by enthusiasts who appreciated the style, reliability, practicality and technology of early Japanese bikes. At that time, air-cooled four-cylinder bikes ruled the roost, twin shock absorbers were in vogue and a middleweight bike was probably 350-500cc. And almost certainly a two stroke.

WHAT DO YOU OFFER CLUB MEMBERS?

There are local sections around the UK, an annual rally, DVLA approved dating of motorcycles, a monthly magazine, model and marque experts, and access to track days through working with CRMC, BSB and WSB. There's also the opportunity to exhibit bikes at the Carol Nash *Classic Motorcycle Mechanics* show in Stafford, and insurance valuations.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU MEET, AND WHERE?

We meet all over the UK, and host monthly, bimonthly, national and regional events.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS?

The club's number one aim is to promote the enjoyment of Japanese motorcycles, pure and simple. You don't even need to own a bike to be a member! All we ask is that members share the club's passion for some of the most amazing mass-produced bikes ever built. It really isn't possible to stereotype a VJMC member; some own big bikes, others are moped mad. Some are passionate about one particular marque, others have wide ranging tastes. It takes all sorts to make a club and that is what the VJMC is all about; enjoying the bikes.

WHERE CAN WE JOIN?

Visit www.vjmc.com, or call 01634 361825 or 07948 563280.



Tell us about your club

For the chance to be featured in *MSL*. Email us at msleditor@mortons.co.uk for a questionnaire.

EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2015

- 6 Classic Bike & Car Meet,**
The Victoria, Coalville LE67 3FA.
01530 814718.
www.vicbikerspub.co.uk
- 7-8 The Footman James 15th Classic Vehicle Restoration Show**
Royal Bath & West BA4 6QN.
- 7 Rufforth Autojumble,**
Rufforth Park YO23 3QH.
www.rufforthautojumble.com
- 8 Garstang Autojumble,**
Hamilton House Farm, Preston PR3 0TB. 07836 331324.
www.garstangautojumbles.co.uk
- 8 Poppy Day Parade & Service - Military Vehicle Meet,**
Ace Café, London.
www.ace-cafe-london.com
- 8 MotoGP**
Valencia. www.motogp.com
- 13 Classic Bike & Car Meet,**
The Victoria, Coalville LE67 3FA.
01530 814718.
www.vicbikerspub.co.uk
- 13-15 Lancaster Insurance Classic Motor Show,**
The NEC 0844 854 1354.
www.necclassicmotorshow.com
- 13-15 Wales Rally GB,**
Chirk Castle, Wrexham LL14 5AF
www.walesrallygb.com
- 15 Normous Newark, Newark Showground,**
Notts NG24 2NY. www.newarkautojumble.co.uk
- 15 VMCC (Northampton) Memorial Run.**
Brixworth Country Park, 10.30am.
01604 592666.
- 15 Bike Day, Ace Café,**
London, Ace Café, London.
www.ace-cafe-london.com
- 20 Classic Bike & Car Meet,**
The Victoria, Coalville LE67 3FA.
01530 814718.
www.vicbikerspub.co.uk
- 21 Scorton Giant Auto/Bike Jumble,**
North Yorkshire Events Centre DL10 6EH. 07909 904705.
- 22 Huddersfield Autojumble.**
07795 505388.
phoenixfairs.jimdo.com
- 22 Ariel OC 'Founders Day' + British & Classic Bikes,**
Ace Café, London.
www.ace-cafe-london.com
- 22 Autojumble,**
Manchester Road, Rixton, near Warrington WA3 6EA.
07860 648103.

- 22 6th Salvation Army Southwell Toy Run,**
Admiral Rodney Hotel, Southwell NG25 0EL. Meet at 10am.
- 27 Classic Bike & Car Meet,**
The Victoria, Coalville LE67 3FA.
01530 814718.
www.vicbikerspub.co.uk
- 28 LE Velo Northampton gathering,**
The George Inn, Tiffield NN12 8AD, noon. 01604 499858.
- 28 Wetherby Autojumble,**
Wetherby Racecourse LS22 5EJ.
www.wetherbyautojumble.co.uk
- 28-Dec 6 Motorcycle Live 2015, NEC.**
www.motorcyclivelive.co.uk
- 29 19th Malvern Drive-In Classic Car & Bike Autojumble,**
Three Counties Showground, Worcs WR13 6NW. 01484 667776.
www.classicshows.org
- 29 Super Moto, Scramblers & Off-Road,**
www.ace-cafe-london.com
- 29 Chelmsford Bike Jumble,**
Boreham Village Hall, Essex CM3 3JD. 02082 526831 or 07968 080990.

DECEMBER 2015

- 4 Classic Bike & Car Meet,**
The Victoria, Coalville LE67 3FA.
01530 814718.
www.vicbikerspub.co.uk
- 5 Southern Off Road & Racing Show & Jumble,**
Kempton Park Racecourse TW16 5AQ.
www.egp-enterprises.co.uk
- 5 Rufforth Autojumble, Rufforth Park,**
York YO23 3QH.
www.rufforthautojumble.com
- 6 VMCC (Northampton) Winter Woolies Run.**
The Bull, Harpole, 11am.
01604 586144.
- 6 Club Day, Ace Café,**
London. www.ace-cafe-london.com
- 11 Classic Bike & Car Meet,**
The Victoria, Coalville LE67 3FA.
01530 814718.
www.vicbikerspub.co.uk
- 13 'Normous Newark,**
Newark Showground, Notts NG24 2NY.
www.newarkautojumble.co.uk
- 13 Xmas Toy Run,**
Ace Café, London.
www.ace-cafe-london.com
- 13 Autojumble,**
Manchester Road, Rixton, near Warrington WA3 6EA.
07860 648103.

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The 2016 CRF250R has a substantial top-end power boost from a new HRC-developed cylinder head, piston and con-rod, with stronger bottom-end torque and no loss of mid-range performance. And the Showa SFF-TAC-Air forks have been further improved to reduce friction and improve response and damping. The aluminium beam frame and mass centralisation programme give the bike lightning fast agility and sure-footed stability while Honda's programmable engine mapping system means riders can select one of three pre-set configurations to suit the prevailing conditions. If you're a serious MX2 competitor, this is the bike you need to ride.

SPECIFICATION:

- 249cc single cylinder engine
- Showa 49mm inverted air suspension SFF-TAC forks
- Aluminium twin tube frame
- 260mm hydraulic wave disc brake
- Engine Mode Select Button on handlebars
- Fuel Injected

ENGINE

Type: Liquid-cooled 4-stroke single cylinder uni-cam
Displacement: 249cc
Max. Power Output: 29.4kW @ 11,500rpm

FRAME

Type: Aluminium twin tube

CHASSIS

Seat Height: 951mm

Ground Clearance: 322mm

Kerb Weight: 105.6kg

SUSPENSION

Front:

Showa 49mm inverted SFF-TAC air fork (310mm stroke)

Rear:

Showa monoshock using Honda Pro-Link system (317.6mm stroke, 133mm axle travel) Dunlop MX52 tyres.

Enter at the Classic Dirt Bike Magazine stand at the International Dirt Bike Show 2015, where the bike will be on display, or enter online at www.dirtbikeshow.co.uk. The winner will be the first name selected at random.

*Competition open to UK applicants only. Specific terms and conditions and general competition terms and conditions apply: visit www.dirtbikeshow.co.uk for full details. Closing date: Monday, 9th November, 2015.

CROSSING THE EQUATOR IN AFRICA

Adventure expert Kevin Sanders, from GlobeBusters, gives us the lowdown on riding through one of the world's best touring destinations...



Crossing the equator on and isn't easy, so it's a great achievement to tick off the bucket list for any adventurous motorcyclist. There are only 14 countries that straddle the line around our plane, running from the mid-way between the poles and the

of those are in Africa (not including Equatorial Guinea, which isn't actually on the equator). Most of the other are in the middle of the Amazon rain forest, which makes Ecuador in South America the only practical alternative for most of

Much as we love South America, when it comes to diversity – scenery, wildlife and people – Sub-Saharan Africa is an incredible destination for a tour. From the arid emptiness of the Skeleton Coast to the thunder of Victoria Falls and the scent of Zanzibar spices, Africa is an assault on the senses. And where else could you see lions, elephants, whales, dolphins and penguins, all in their natural habitat? At GlobeBusters we've led several African expeditions and the route from Kenya to the Cape of Good Hope is our favourite, giving riders an opportunity to cross the equator and enjoy many landmarks in the 'Dark Continent' over the course of six weeks.

WHY START IN KENYA?

Of the six equatorial countries, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advises against all travel to Somalia and all but essential travel to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, so that leaves four; Congo, Gabon, Kenya and Uganda. Of those, Kenya is the most advanced/accessible and it's relatively simple to air freight bikes in from the UK. Specialist companies like Moto Freight (www.motofreight.com 0845 2417055) can make all the arrangements, so you simply fly in and collect your machine from the

airport along a you have a cane de passage (a compulsory passport/expense document for your bike).

From Nairobi, on the eastern edge of the Rift Valley, a short drive to the equator when you can head south to the Ngong'o Conservation World Heritage Site in the Highlands of Tanzania, where you can spot lions and giraffe, wildebeest and warthog. Not a bad start to a trip, although be warned that most

ABOVE: Many of the roads are fairly easy but you need to watch out for deep areas of sand.





national parks in Africa won't allow bikes in, for fear of you becoming a lion's lunch, so you'll need to head in on a 4x4 Jeep Tour.

While you're in Tanzania, don't forget to visit the highest mountain in Africa, Mount Kilimanjaro, with its three volcanic cones, before taking the ferry to the spice island of Zanzibar in the Indian Ocean (the birthplace of Freddie Mercury). Zanzibar is better as an 'off bike' side excursion, taking the passenger ferry across, and it means you can kick back for a few days on pristine white sand bars in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Tanzania would be a dream country to ride in, but for the police, recently equipped with the latest radar and camera equipment and carefully placed at the end of most villages. You can expect to pay an 'off-the-record' 10,000 Tanzanian schillings (roughly £3) every time you're stopped, unless you have a very good story to tell. We have heard pretending to be a vicar or the Swedish Transport Minister works well!

Back on the mainland, ride through the coffee plantations into Malawi, home to the third-largest lake in Africa, where you can witness incredible sunsets. Malawi also has some of the best twisty roads, all paved and pretty free from traffic, (although watch out for the pedestrians and cyclists). As one of the poorest countries in the world, owning a bicycle ranks you at the top of the pecking order – most people walk everywhere and all along the side of the main road.

From there, travel west into Zambia and the historic colonial town of Livingstone, where the Zambezi River plunges over the cliffs, forming the mile-wide Victoria Falls. Cross the Zambezi on a small pontoon and you arrive in Botswana, home to the Chobe National Park, which has one of the largest concentrations of game in Africa and is famed for its spectacular elephant population. Swap your bike for a boat here and spend the afternoon floating along the river animal spotting.

ABOVE: Crossing the equator on a bike is a real 'bucket-list' achievement.

TOP RIGHT: Africa is one of the most diverse continents.

ABOVE RIGHT: Expect plenty of (friendly) interest in your machine.

HERE BE GIANTS

Entering Namibia, you'll ride through the long narrow Caprivi Strip, sandwiched between Zambia, Botswana and Angola – it's a completely Tarmac road and pretty long and straight, but seeing wild elephant at the side of the road is almost guaranteed, so be careful if you're tempted to blast at top speed.

From there it's mostly unpaved tracks down to the Skeleton Coast and when you arrive, you'll have traversed Africa from the Indian Ocean to the South Atlantic! The coastal road is a salt road, so almost as good as concrete and not too difficult for anyone to ride; make sure you look out for shipwrecks and seals. Once back inland, you ride the dirt roads of the Namib Desert to the 'moonscape' of the red Sossusvlei Dunes and the majesty of Fish River Canyon, which is 100 miles long, up to 17 miles wide and almost 550 metres deep in places. These roads are unpredictable for bikers and in the high season they are graded every 10 days to try and ensure they don't get too heaped up with gravel and sand, but even so, you need to be up on the pegs and keeping a keen eye out for deeper sand sections – it's really safer to tackle these roads in small groups, just in case.



Cross the Orange River into South Africa and ride through the Cederberg Wilderness area, a mountain range that's home to an endangered species of cedar tree. Soon you'll be in the vineyards around Stellenbosch, one of the oldest towns in the country, and with some of the finest vineyards in the world! From there you are perfectly placed to ride to the southernmost tip of Africa – Cape Agulhas.

Leaving there, follow the coast road around False Bay and onto the Cape of Good Hope. Ride Chapman's Peak Drive, a spectacular road that hugs the near vertical face of a mountain, and into Cape Town, nestling below Table Mountain. Then you can freight your bike back home and catch a passenger flight from the international airport.

HOW MUCH EXPERIENCE WILL I NEED?

Riding in Africa is predictably unpredictable. Expect anything from anywhere – after all, you're sharing the roads with wildlife, domesticated animals, people and some of the worst-maintained vehicles on the planet. On top of that, you need to be confident riding on gravel roads, as they feature widely, particularly in Namibia. We would not recommend riding in Africa unless you have some experience of riding overseas, particularly covering long distances in hot climates. And, if you're bringing a pillion along for the ride, the same goes for them too.

WHEN TO GO

Early spring is the best time to travel in Southern Africa and, because it's in the southern hemisphere, that means September and October, before the rainy season in summer (being British, we can identify with heavy rainfall in summer!) It's warmer closer to the equator, with temperatures on average between 25-30°C. As you approach South Africa, the climate becomes more temperate, with the chance of rain.



WHAT DOCUMENTS DO I NEED?

If you're a UK citizen you only need to get the Kenya Visa in advance and you apply online as an e-visa. You can purchase visas at the borders for Tanzania and Zambia and no other countries mentioned here require them. But you will need a carnet de passage for your bike, which you can get from the RAC. Obviously, your original passport and driving licence are essential.

WHAT CURRENCY SHOULD I TAKE?

Apart from in major cities and at luxury hotels, your credit card will be pretty much redundant. We advise travellers to stock up on US dollars and the South African rand, which is linked to a number of other currencies in the region. Both are readily exchangeable in most of the Southern African countries.

WHAT BIKE SHOULD I RIDE?

Unless you intend to make your trip a physical challenge, you need a reliable adventure sports bike, with plenty of suspension travel, so that it can cope with poorly maintained roads. There are some decent choices of Triumph in Southern Africa but most of you will find a medium-capacity machine, like the Triumph Tiger 800, will have plenty of power for covering long distances in comfort. Depending on your needs, you may also want to consider a dual-sport bike, which can be used on both roads and off-road. Some countries, so a decent tank range is essential and we tend to carry a small amount of extra fuel on the bike in case of emergency.

Find out more at www.globebuster.com

BELOW: Many of the roads are perfectly paved, and wonderfully empty.



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A full-page photograph of a rider on a 2009 Ducati Streetfighter 1100 motorcycle. The rider is wearing a blue and yellow helmet with 'Arai' and 'RICH-BKT' branding, and black leather riding gear. The motorcycle is white and black, with 'Ducati' and 'Streetfighter' visible on the fairings. The front wheel is prominently featured in the foreground, showing a Brembo brake disc. The background is a blurred green field and a road, suggesting motion.

USED TEST: 2009 DUCATI STREETFIGHTER 1100

Ducati's replacement for the S4RS isn't the monster you might expect...

WORDS: Chris Moss
PHOTOGRAPHY: Mike Weston

The Streetfighter 1100 was an odd addition to Ducati's naked bike range, the power of its 155bhp engine arguably being way over the top. Essentially it was a stripped-down 1098 sportsbike – though there were numerous subtle differences between the two bikes – it replaced the 130bhp Monster S4RS, a machine most considered more than speedy enough. More importantly, almost everyone lamented the loss of the iconic Monster styling from what had been until then Ducati's strongest performing naked bike.

But the powerful Streetfighter 1100 still has the chance to become a bit of a collector's model. Its production run only lasted from 2009 to 2012, and as its sales weren't great (at £11,500 its price was quite salty), it's rarely seen on British roads. The standard

model we're looking at here was actually preceded by the higher-spec S version; equipped with Öhlins suspension, forged wheels, and a traction control system, it's easily identified by its bronze coloured frame. It was dropped from the Ducati line-up after just four years.

A bike that's outlasted the two 1100s is the smaller 848 version introduced in 2012. With very similar styling, a less powerful 130bhp engine, tamer chassis geometry, and less ferocious brakes, the 848 is more of a real-world package. It remains in the Ducati range.

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO RIDE?

It's clear Ducati's strikingly-styled Streetfighter 1100 is a sportsbike minus the fairing. What takes quite a bit longer to realise is just how accomplished the Italian bike is; the more you ride it, the more impressed you'll be.

The Duke's handling is the main issue that requires time and mileage to fully understand and appreciate – just taking it off its stand instantly tells you the Streetfighter is a very light motorcycle. Ducati claims it tips the scales with just a 169kg dry weight.



Specification

2009 DUCATI STREETFIGHTER

Engine: 1099cc, liquid-cooled, 8v, Desmodromic, dohc, 90° V-twin

Power: 155bhp (116kW) @ 9500rpm

Torque: 85lb-ft (115Nm) @ 9500rpm

Transmission: Six-speed, chain final drive

Frame: Steel-tubed trellis

Suspension: (F) 43mm inverted telescopic forks, fully adjustable; (R) Rising-rate monoshock, fully adjustable

Brakes: (F) Twin 330mm discs, four-piston radial calipers; (R) 245mm disc, twin-piston caliper

Tyres: (F) 120/70-17; (R) 190/55-17

Seat Height: 840mm

Wheelbase: 1475mm

Kerb Weight: 189kg

Fuel Capacity: 16.5 litres



VALUES

**£6500-
£9000**

*Prices are for early models sold privately in average condition to newer, well cared for examples available at dealers. Expect to pay £1000 more for the higher-spec S model.

And though fuel, oil and water will add to that, the toy-like feel of the bike even in ready-to-go trim suggests the Italian factory's declaration is about right.

It's arguably this very fact that dictates why you need time before you'll feel completely together with the Streetfighter. I know my initial opinions of the chassis performance weren't anywhere near as fully complimentary as they'd become later.

At first the bike just feels over-reactive, with any conscious rider input often bringing too much of an effect. This is especially true of the steering, and it's all too easy to get the bike to oversteer. All body movements have to be light, smooth and consistent –

this is quite a sensitive motorcycle. But even when you've learned to be smoother and more delicate, and got the chance to make more progress, you're then given new challenges to face. Thanks to the sporty geometry of the chassis – designed to create the agile response – there's a hint of instability in the front end.

This is magnified whenever you're accelerating harder over rougher roads thanks to the stiff fork action and very responsive V-twin engine removing weight from the front wheel. Again, time helps, and once you realise that the steering damper will calm any friskiness completely you can then start riding with greater confidence. Once fully used to the chassis' manners, you can look forward to some exceptional handling from the taut and rigid Ducati.

There's no doubt that some compromises have been made to achieve the sort of handling performance the Duke is capable of; as well as the previously mentioned issues, the firm ride of the suspension won't suit everyone. It gives plenty of support and control but it's definitely more suited to smoother roads, especially if you prefer more comfortable ride quality. In fairness, you can dial some of the stiffness out of the forks and shock thanks to their fully-adjustable specification, but it's probably better just to accept the Streetfighter for what it actually is – a fairly

I OWN ONE

Russell Doughty is a 52-year-old engineer from Thame, and he happily admits he doesn't use his Streetfighter too much. "It's my 'best' bike. I've got a Suzuki GSX1250FA for most of my riding, but whenever the sun's out and I fancy a ride just for the sheer pleasure of it, the Duke comes out.

"I bought it new around four years ago, and have only done around 7000 miles. But I've enjoyed every single one. It's nowhere near a perfect bike, and sometimes it can irritate me. But when you really love a bike, like I do my Ducati, then you always forgive it for its minor faults. It's hugely endearing.

"If I'm honest, it can be a bit too sporty for me at times. The motor's mad when you rev it and it's quite wheelie-prone. Luckily it's flexible enough if you short-shift through the gears to keep the revs down. It sounds utterly superb when you give it some though. First gear's a bit tall in town and the power comes on a bit sharply off a closed throttle in the little gears, but I've learned to live with those issues – I just stay out of town! Not being able to put my foot squarely on the right hand footrest because of the exhaust heat shield is a bit of a pain too.

"The handling feels a bit edgy until you're used to it too. It feels like a toy and steers super quickly. Whenever I get on it after my Suzuki, it feels way too sharp. The suspension's too firm really. It doesn't feel too bad after a while, and makes more sense when you're going faster. Even so, I should get it sorted really. The brakes are shockingly powerful.

"All in all though, I think it's a fantastic bike. After a good ride on it – which just about all of them are – I can just sit and stare at it and fall in love. Every time I see it when I open my garage door I get a big buzz. Oh, I've never had any problems with it either."



Dash is a departure from the S4RS dials.



The brakes are nothing short of phenomenal... they've got huge power... enough to haul up the Ducati with just a single finger

I SELL THEM

Iain Rhodes of Rhodes and Track (www.rhodesandtrack.com, 01604 210900) has lots of experience with Streetfighters.

"It's a rare beast that we don't see too many of these days. Ducati fans didn't warm to them originally, primarily because of their expense. £11,500 was a lot to pay, and traditionalists didn't care for the four-valve, water-cooled engine as much as the two-valve air-cooled motors. It was a bit too complex and modern in their book.

"But the fact is, the Streetfighter's a good used buy. Prices are a lot more affordable now. And thanks to it being owned by older, more affluent riders who like to have things done right, you'll struggle to find one in less than excellent order. They don't put much more than 1000-2000 miles on them each year, only ride them in good weather and, more often than not, they get them dealer serviced.

"They usually only modify their bikes with official, or Ducati-approved accessories. Termignoni pipes are especially popular, as are carbon parts like huggers. Slightly higher bars or bar risers make the bike more comfortable and we see quite a few with those fitted.

"Streetfighters are very solid and reliable machines, with no known major problems. They were made when Ducati was working hard to rid itself of its reputation for iffy quality. Stuff like clutches, cam belts, valve gear and electrics that were once questionable are all sorted on Dukes in this era.

"You can stretch the service intervals for the valves a little as the vast majority don't need adjusting at the recommended 12,000 miles. Besides, most Streetfighters haven't even done that yet. Belts should be changed every two years, and working on them at home isn't so bad. Fluid changes are easy enough, but the valves and cam belts are best left to dealers really."

DEALER SERVICING

MINOR @ 6000
MILES/12 MONTHS =

£250-£350

MAJOR @ 12,000
MILES/24 MONTHS =

£550-£650.

*Costs will vary depending on labour rates and condition of your bike.

OTHER BIKES TO CONSIDER

BMW K1300R

2009-current, 1293cc inline four, 173bhp, 243kg

An unusual offering for an established manufacturer, the K1300R also has very strong performance. Impressive in-line four motor likes revs, and quality chassis featuring Duolever front end handles well if a bit heavily. Brakes are very strong.



TRIUMPH SPEED TRIPLE R

2012-current, 1050cc inline triple, 133bhp, 186kg

One of the most iconic British models ever made. Improved with age, the triple is stylish, speedy and very endearing. Plenty of power and torque make speed gains easy. Competent chassis keeps it all under control.



SUZUKI B-KING

2007-2012, 1340cc inline four, 164bhp, 235kg

A dividing bike if there ever was one – futuristic looks aren't for all. Super-grunty motor and capable chassis are much more likeable. Way easier to ride than its looks suggest. Never really caught on, but could still become a classic yet.



APRILIA TUONO V4R

2011-current, 999cc, 65° V4, 167bhp, 183kg

Essentially a naked, highly-equipped sportsbike, the Tuono boasts fierce performance, precise handling and masses of character and style. But the fantasy is tempered by impracticality with a poor fuel range and some discomfort.



The Streetfighter's styling puts many Ducati purists off.

uncompromising, high performance sportsbike without the bodywork.

Other parts of the machine remind you of its speedy design focus too, and you'll be impressed by a couple of them whenever you want to raise or lower the pace. The brakes probably deserve the most praise – they are nothing short of phenomenal, with huge power to haul up the Ducati, but because of their superb feedback it's possible to bring the bike down to a halt from very high speed with just a single finger, and do so in complete control and safety. No doubt the quality of support offered by the forks, the fantastic grip of the front tyre, and the fact that there's not much weight to pull up in the first place all influence the astounding braking ability.

Unsurprisingly, the engine warrants a complimentary word or two as well. Given that it's based on the big V-twin that powered the 1098 sportsbike, though with quite a few parts from the later 1198 version, you'd expect plenty of drive for

little effort from the throttle, and that's pretty much what you get. One thing that I didn't expect though was just how usable it is. Looking at the spec sheet that reveals a claimed 155bhp at first had me thinking the Streetfighter could be an aggressive animal needing an expert's taming hand. The reality was far different, and if I'm honest I was actually a little disappointed with the engine until, just as was the case with the chassis, I'd learned how to get the best out of it.

Typical of this layout, the motor is generally strong and flexible, so choosing the right gear and rpm aren't crucial to making good progress. But if you want to sample the full strength of the V-twin, it's better to spin it more. Do that and the Ducati accelerates very, very strongly, increasing revs rapidly enough to make swift and successive upward gear changes essential to avoid hitting the limiter. Under those circumstances, the claim of 155bhp seems more likely to be genuine. You need to be aware of the tall first gear in town, and the jerkiness caused by imperfect fuelling at small throttle openings makes twistgrip and clutch juggling necessary for smooth running at very low speed. And at the other end of the scale it's important to bear in mind that using the engine more keenly in the lower gears will risk the front wheel parting with terra firma.

Mind you, with such stimulating performance and a superb aural accompaniment from the twin exhaust cans it's nice to hear the engine breathe more freely. As more of a purist's bike that constantly rewards speed, it's sometimes difficult to be disciplined with the stylish Streetfighter's throttle. In short, the Ducati is a real rider's bike that's hard to resist enjoying in the way its designers clearly intended it to be.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

The Streetfighter is a very good used buy. Owners are usually 40-50 years old with a few quid in the bank, and don't skimp on things like servicing or repairs. The bike is very reliable if it's cared for, and as owners only tend to use them for special occasions they usually only average a maximum of 2000 miles a year – usually clocked up in dry weather. Bear this mileage in mind as an expensive valve and cam belt service is due at 12,000 miles.



LOWER GEARING

To reduce low rpm snatching, improve acceleration and make life in town more civilised, fitting a one-tooth smaller gearbox sprocket offers a cheap solution. It will also increase the clearance between the rear tyre and swingarm, which can be very tight.

RIDING POSITION

The sporty, canted forward riding position can be raised with bar risers or higher aftermarket handlebars like Renthals. Unfortunately, you have to live with the right boot-displacing exhaust heat shield.

VALVES

It's usually safe to extend the 12,000-mile valve check, as most clearances are within tolerance at this mileage. Checking them at 18,000 miles is okay. Be aware if the engine begins to tickover erratically though. Good Ducati experts can check things with an exhaust gas analyser.

ELECTRICS

The Streetfighter's electrical system is reputedly robust and reliable. Batteries will give problems if the bike is laid up and they're left uncharged for longer periods.

SUSPENSION

The suspension is definitely designed for harder riding. Its firm settings may prove uncomfortable for many at slower speeds. The forks can be adjusted to provide a plusher ride, though some riders might feel the internals need reworking. Maxton Suspension can replace the rear shock with a GP10, and also offer a linear conversion option.



AFTERMARKET EXHAUSTS

These are a popular modification. They work best if the fuelling is adjusted more accurately with a Power Commander.

CHAIN ADJUSTING HUB

Take care when adjusting the chain. The two clamping bolts in the swingarm must be torqued correctly to avoid any hub bearing damage. The eccentric hub rarely seizes.

CAM BELTS

Ducati advises a belt change every two years even at low mileage. Some mechanics say this can be extended to three years. Only tension with specialist kit. Renew at 12,000 miles regardless of the age.

ENGINE

Though the big V-twin has enough usable torque and power at lower rpm, its strongest performance comes with extra revs. Watch out for wheelies if you do spin it more though.

BRAKES

The Brembo monobloc calipers offer massive braking power. Anything less indicates attention being required. Piston seizures and disc warp are very rare.

As the Streetfighter wasn't a massive seller during its short production run, there's not a huge number of them available on the used bike market. You may need to travel a fair distance to get one, though as the vast majority have been very well looked after it's usually worth the trip. Normal checks are all that are really necessary on this Ducati, as it doesn't suffer from any major issues. A full service history is important, though very few Streetfighter riders tackle maintenance themselves. Basic fluid changes can be done at home, but you need to see good evidence of this being done. More major engine work is trickier, and needs to be done by experienced mechanics with special tools to get right.

Check the clearance between the outside diameter of the rear tyre and swingarm. It was so tight on some of the earlier bikes, the combination of using higher profile rubber and a gearing change using the fitment

of a larger rear sprocket could result in contact. The Ducati does benefit from lowering the overall gearing a little to solve the problem of the tall first gear, but it's best to fit a smaller front sprocket.

Fitting a Power Commander improves fuelling, and makes the throttle response feel less abrupt in the lower gears. The clutch is dry, and problems are very rare, though it does pay to remove the cover and blow out dust periodically.

Some may find the suspension action too firm. Backing off the adjusters helps, but ultimately you have to have the forks reworked and fit a softer rear spring. Choosing the S model with its more supple set-up might be a wiser choice. The standard steering damper isn't adjustable, but fitting one which will give more choice to how you want the steering to feel sorts this. Unfortunately the one fitted to the S model is just the same as the standard bike's.



The rider

JOHN MILBANK

Editor of MSL, John's passion for bikes started with a pillion ride on an FZR1000 EXUP; he's since owned everything from a DT80 to his current motorcycle, a Ducati Monster S4R. Excited by all bikes, his dream garage includes a Pan European and a VMAX.



The bike

KAWASAKI VERSYS 1000

Cost new: £9949

Performance: 120bhp, 75lb-ft

Wet weight: 250kg

Tank size: 21 litres

Seat height: 840mm

Is bigger always better?

John loves the Versys 650, so the 1000 must be 54% better. Right?

What I want from a bike has changed many times over the years. For a long period it just had to be fast and cheap. Several CBR600s fitted that bill. There were brief stints with off-road bikes, big old trailies, tourers... even a little supermoto pit bike. I still like something quick, but I'm not worried about going really fast anymore. I want to be able to get anywhere I want, and I'm rubbish at packing. That means lots of luggage.

My wife – Helen – and I have recently discovered Unseen Tours in London (see the panel), and as we really enjoy days out like this, I now want a motorcycle that can get us both in and out of the capital, with plenty of space to store our riding gear while we're there. The Versys 650 does that well, and it's great value. But occasionally I've found myself wishing for just a bit more power, a slightly more positive gearbox, and a comfier seat. The Versys 1000 has, on paper at least, everything I could wish

for. It's styled much like the 650, has plenty of space, and it's very good value for money.

I had a Z1000SX last year, so I already knew the engine should be good. It is – the Versys motor puts out 20bhp less than the Z1000SX, but it does so at 9000rpm – a useful 1000rpm earlier than the sports-tourer. It makes 75lb-ft at 7500rpm, which is down compared to 82lb-ft at 7300rpm. Trust me... it's more than enough. And of course, the 1000 has the incredible induction roar that Kawasaki often tunes into its airboxes. Without riding the same route back-to-back, it's impossible to say if the Versys is more economical than the Zed, but it appears to be, if only ever so slightly. With the aerodynamics of the sports tourer, it almost certainly would be.

The gearbox is a joy after the 650, which can feel a little vague, and the clutch, while still cable operated, is much lighter. The only addition to the clocks – besides indicators of full or reduced power modes and the

three-stage/off traction control – is an engine and external temperature gauge. But it's the access to the display that's a real pleasure; rather than having to reach over the yoke to select or reset the info, a rocker switch on the left bar is a great improvement.

CARRYING THE LOAD

This bike came with the standard Kawasaki panniers, so I fitted the great Givi aluminium rear rack to pop my Trekker box on (Helen wouldn't be without her backrest). While the OE kit panniers look good, they're wider than my 33-litre Trekkers; add that to the already much wider four-cylinder machine and filtering becomes a problem.

Strangely, the Versys 1000 has a sticker on the back saying its carrier plate is rated to just 6kg. My top box weighs 5.5kg when empty, so I had to just assume that was a safety rating that took into account the heaviest possible rider and pillion on the worst possible roads. In the end, with



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We called in at Harpenden dealer's coffee morning on the way.

With some very dubious calculations, I reckon the Versys 1000 is 65% better than the 650...

all the luggage fully loaded, the Versys behaved well. I'd say that – surprisingly – the 650 is slightly more stable when fully laden, but I expect that's more down to the fact that the 1000 delivers a lot more power, so is unloading the front more during hard acceleration.

We tend to park right in the centre of the city – usually in Q-Park's Hyde Park facility, but this time in St John's Wood; it's free for bikes, but it can mean picking your way through a lot of traffic. The size of the 1000, along with its 34kg of additional weight made this a lot less fun. It was to be expected really, and not every rider will be doing this kind of journey too often. What did surprise me though was that Helen found the peg position less comfortable than the 650 – it's the first time she's had to stretch her legs out on the 110-mile ride home, so as with any bike, make sure you both go on the test ride – I know other passengers have no complaints with the thou.

We spent the night with friends, and after two days I realised the extra power hadn't really come in that useful. It was fun to have, but it didn't make any real difference to our journey. On back roads, without the luggage or Helen, the 1000 handled almost as well as the 650. It feels more solid, but with that comes a greater mass to slow down. On tight, twisty roads, I found it very hard to justify the 52bhp and 28lb-ft advantage over the smaller bike, so while on a long

motorway trip it's nice to have a bit more grunt, it's far from a deal-breaker.

The Versys 1000 is 45% more expensive than the 650. It's still an excellent value machine – as we discovered during the group test in the October issue – but it comes back to what I need from a bike right now. The seat is only about 5% better than the 650's, but the gearbox is probably 30% better, the exhaust (more the induction) note 50% better and the clocks 10%. Okay, it's 76% more powerful, but it turns out that – where I ride – there's just not the chance to use that.

It's also 25% wider at the back and 16% heavier, which is a disadvantage for city riding, and Helen found the pillion seat 20% less comfortable. With some very dubious calculations,



Bike parking at Q-Park in St John's Wood – not much space for the Versys, but it's free!

London's best tours

Not-for-profit Unseen Tours provides paid work for vulnerably housed individuals as tour guides. Each event costs just £10 per person, with 60% of the revenue going direct to the guide, and the rest used for essential operating expenses.

We've been on the Shoreditch tour with Henri – who used to live in a tent in Old Street, and the Camden tour with Mike – whose change in circumstances (like Henri's) is a chilling reminder of how close we all are to finding ourselves in a very different situation.

The trips smash stereotypes, but they're not about poverty tourism. Both Mike and Henri surprised us, made us laugh, and made us think. We saw where U2 had their first proper gig; we found out what happened when The Clash were playing with an air-rifle on top of what's now a trendy department store; we learned where the phrase 'daylight robbery' came from; and we saw what used to be an MI5 detention centre, Shakespeare's first London theatre and a private Mafia bank. This is one of the best things you can do in London; it's great value, it's fascinating and enjoyable, and it's another excuse to go somewhere on the bike.

sockmobevents.org.uk



I make that 171% of positives and 106% of negatives. Mathematicians please don't write in, but I reckon the Versys 1000 is 65% better than the 650. By my reckoning then, it's undoubtedly worth the extra money, and it's a very, very good bike, but as I need something small, light and as inexpensive as possible, the 650 is still the most – oh dear, that word again – versatile.

This month

Miles: 776

In total: 776

Average mpg: 48.5mpg

Highlights: Discovering another side to London

Lowlights: Getting stuck in London

Limiting the joy

A damaged body has capped Tony's fun on his GSX.

A bad right knee has scuppered me. It's a legacy of one big crash way back in 1994 and quite a few smaller crashes since. It isn't fun. I won't bore you with the details but, suffice to say, it needs knife work and it means that I can't bend my leg to the shape it needs to be in order to sit on the racey GSX-S.

What this does mean is that while I might not be able to have got out and enjoyed Big Blue as much as the remnants of the Indian Summer may have suggested that I should, what I have been concentrating on is the more practical aspects of the job, by using the Suzuki as the workhorse that long term test bikes inevitably have to become.

After many hundreds of miles of business-type commuting, and the filtering that happens along with this sort of thing, there are good and bad things to report. Let's start with the

bad. The mirrors give just enough of a view behind to be useful – but it's only 'just' enough. Relax your arms a bit and elbows fill the rearward vision. There's some vibration at around 6000rpm, too. The footrests are a bit too race-oriented for serious mileage (my limit is around an hour on the motorway before leg stretching starts) and boy, could this bike use that cockpit fairing add-on just to take the edge off the windblast at anything over 80mph.

Niggles, all of those. But don't let anything there put you off this bike. It's still amazing and terrific at what it does. But the footrests thing is making me grumpy at the moment, and the reasons for that are more organic than mechanic, which is worth remembering.

Now the good. That seat might look like it was a tool left over from the Spanish Inquisition, but it's actually really good. No numb bum to report, even on five hour-long



The rider TONY CARTER

Former editor of MSL and now looking after our sister paper MotorCycle Monthly, along with MoreBikes.co.uk, Tony's been riding almost 30 years. He currently owns a Suzuki RGV250 and a Yamaha YZR500 replica.

The bike SUZUKI GSX-S1000A

Cost new: £9499

Performance:
143.5bhp,
78lb-ft

Wet weight:
209kg

Tank size: 17
litres

Seat height:
810mm

This month

Miles: 401

In total: 1503

Average mpg: 57

Highlights:
Excellent
motorway
manners, kudos
from serious
biking people

Lowlights:
Footrests too
tucked up for a
knackered knee

ABOVE: The GSX's powerful brakes also work well in general road riding.

LEFT: Tony's Suzuki has been turning the heads of many other brands.

round trips. The handlebar reach is ideal for me and the width feels about right when you're lane-splitting on the M25. There's enough room to mount the Tom Tom Rider 400 sat nav and still be able to see the whole of the minimalist dash without issue.

The engine can be fatiguing on the longest of days but that's largely down to the revvy-nature of the beast, and the eagerness it has inherently built-in to just gooooooooooooo whenever you grab at the throttle. Play the right hand like you would any other tourer and it takes some of the pep out of the delivery. You can cruise easily, with the engine sitting at around 7000rpm for most motorway work, but the high note adds to the feeling that you're not in this bike's natural habitat.

The brakes are great for mile munching; because of the track nature of the set-up they are fiercely powerful if you grab a handful, but for scrubbing speed off from high-end figures with just one finger they are spot on. That really makes a difference when you're racking up the miles for hour after hour.

I've been using the bike in my everyday work life and there's been a good amount of interest in the GSX-S when I've pulled up at other manufacturers. The bike industry has long asked the question why it's taken so long for Suzuki to make this bike when it had the component parts effectively sitting on the shelf for so long. But now it has, the GSX-S is well received by those who have managed to get one and others in the game that have been long-standing fans of the GSX-R1000 K5 upon which this motorcycle is based.

A month of motorways has underlined two things – this is a motorcycle that is more fun-time girl than steady Enid, but can still get you where you want without drama; and that wherever you go on the Suzuki there's a real fondness from other bikers who know their onions.



Light fantastic

Being late home proves an illuminating experience for Steve.

Blimey, was that summer? Another long day doing laps of the UK motorway network. Another ride of snatched twisting opportunities in between the multi-laned mayhem, and thanks to some spectacularly bad timing I hit the M25 (just another 130 miles to go) at dead-on 5.30 and immediately slow down to 35mph, carving through some particularly tricky traffic. When did ordinary cars get so wide? I guess every new generation people carrier or family hatchback has got to be bigger and fatter than before. It's the simplest form of marketing – just go large.

Today the traffic is on another level, with non-stop filtering from Bourne End to the Bedford turning off of the M1. By my reckoning that's about 45 miles of traffic travelling at walking pace and 55 minutes of my time that should have seen me some 35 miles closer to home.

The VFR rides well in traffic. The mirrors are the widest part and with those pulled in (I don't need to know what's behind me right now) it glides through gaps. This is where the two-valve engine mode makes sense. Lazy, easy, torquey. Stick it in third gear and use your brain to focus on the three-dimensional trigonometry unfolding ahead. This is also where the linked brakes earn their money. Both hands wrapped round the grips, allowing the right foot to control speed with a gentle dab every now and then.

The VFR's suspension soaks up those weird mid-lane craters (a speciality of the M25 these days) and by the time we clear the traffic at Milton Keynes, I've only ground away about half of my teeth through nerves and wide-eyed anticipation.

But now I'm going to be late. And I'm knackered. Mentally exhausted from almost an hour of intense concentration. I stop for a coffee, a bladder-burble and a phone call

home and then head back on the road, knowing that it'll be dark by the time I hit the twists and turns of Lincolnshire.

As the light dims I notice for the first time the Honda's classy, blue instrument lighting and as we hit the twisties, I'm aware of the almost-equally blue headlight beam.

At first I'm not sure whether the unnaturally good visibility is just because it is dusk and not dark. But as the last of the light fades, the quality of the Honda's headlight, especially while on main beam, becomes apparent.

The last 10 miles are just brilliant. I am attacking corners with confidence because I can see where I am and where I'm going. Riding at night is fun on this bike, so much so that on the outskirts of town I turn around and do the last stretch again.

This is the time of year when there aren't too many good rides left... best to make the most of every opportunity then.

The rider **STEVE ROSE**

Steve Rose has been riding for 32 years and still gets far too giddy about every motorcycle he rides; "The best bike in the world is the last one I rode." Worrying then that he was senior road tester on the UK's two biggest motorcycle monthlies. He owns a 1991 Yamaha TDR250, he is currently scanning eBay for a Yamaha FZR1000R, MZ TS150 or a 1980s chopper called Feline Fantasy.



The Bike **HONDA VFR800**

Price: £10,499

Performance: 105bhp, 55lb-ft

Wet weight: 239kg

Seat height: 789/809mm

Tank size: 21.5litres

This month

Miles: 217

In total: 2603

Average mpg: 54

Highlights:

Traffic-busting poise, luxurious lighting

Lowlights:

Excessive diesel inhalation (damn you VWs)

Steve's a big fan of the Honda's powerful headlights.





The Rider DOUG SHAW

Having ridden bikes for the best part of his life, Doug now relishes the cruiser lifestyle and is a particular fan of big V-twins. Long journeys are his forte, often with his son or wife on the back.



The Bike INDIAN ROADMASTER

Cost new: From £21,999

Performance: 90bhp, 119lb-ft

Wet weight: 421kg

Tank Size: 20.8ltrs

Seat Height: 673mm

This Month

Miles: 1370

In total: 6280

Average mpg: 40mpg

Highlights: Getting to ride it on the Continent

Lowlights: A dodgy locking mechanism

Indian Summer

A heatwave and technical issues somewhat altered Doug's trip around Europe.

We wanted a holiday in the south of France and I figured the Indian could be the perfect motorcycle to get us there. A 2350-mile route had been plotted, taking a leisurely 12 days to complete. The better half was set to join me, and she made good use of the bike's enormous integrated panniers, brimming them with what looked sufficient supplies to see us through for the best part of a month.

The Channel Tunnel was our preferred route onto the Continent – the train service was brilliant and we decided to make the most of the toll routes to blitz it down to Saint-Dizier, some 236 miles away. At 39°C, we were sweltering and no matter how much I changed the position of the screen or opened up the leg shields, nothing managed to improve the oppressive heat.

Relaxing that night over dinner at La Maison dans le Parc, we decided to plan the following day's route. Would it be cooler travelling into Switzerland? We checked the forecast; it said not. Neuchâtel, where we were destined for next, was suggesting it

would be roasting again the following day. With not many other options, we decided to plod on regardless.

Staying away from the main roads, the winding route we took was simply stunning. Having ditched our textiles in favour of jeans and jacket made the ride a little more bearable, but I wouldn't go as far as to say we were comfortable. Another problem caused by the heat was the melting of the roads... To improve the scenario, the French had elected to throw sand onto the Tarmac, which made things even scarier for us on the Indian.

Stopping for lunch, things got worse when the centrally locked top-box decided it didn't want to open. Inside it were our passports, cash and other essential documents; we had reached crisis point.

We were stranded at Besançon, only two hours from Switzerland. A quick search showed a rival American big twin dealership only 1.6km away. If we had to break into the luggage, at least they might have been able to do so in the kindest way possible, enabling us to carry on with some security. As it turned out, the dealership's mechanics didn't need to use force to access the top-box,

disabling the central locking in the process so it would give us no more grief. With no way of locking the top box, dire warnings on French TV regarding the heatwave, and my wife Wendy feeling pretty unwell in the heat, with regret we decided to abandon our trip.

At nine the following morning, the temperature was already in the 30s. We'd had enough. That day we rode as far as we could, reaching a hotel near the tunnel crossing to recover before the last stretch back to Lincolnshire the following morning. After another pleasurable train journey, we arrived back into the UK, where the temperature was in the 20s. Our journey home was glitch free and showed off the qualities of the Indian. The bike itself had been a superb companion, although I can't say the same about the panniers. In general, I was pleasantly surprised by the bike, which had proven comfortable, easy to ride and relatively economical; returning an average 40mpg. It had proven a great choice of bike and I'm gutted we didn't get to pair up for the full journey, for which I know it will have been more than up to the job. Maybe next year...



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LONG TERMERS

Very amusing

You don't need an adventure bike to go off the beaten track...

Last month was all about queueing to get into Skeg-Vegas, which for those of a southern persuasion is the east coast's busiest seaside town. The two main routes in are both great roads, but from April to November they are clogged with slow cars, even slower caravans and the occasional vintage tractor rally. A bike gets you there quicker, but it's hardly the stuff of fantasies.

This month I decided to go native and look for the back-road route. Lincolnshire has hundreds of teeny, tiny minor roads that criss-cross the county and are almost traffic-free. And the perfect vehicle to explore them on is a quick-steering, lightweight, nimble motorcycle with instant power and suspension good enough to cope with a few decades of lapsed road repairs. The RC390 could have been designed for the job.

These roads aren't especially fast or wide, but they are mostly flat, so there's enough visibility to know when you can use it all. They are mostly 'point-and-squirt', which suits the KTM's punchy power delivery a

treat and they also have a habit of springing an unexpected ninety-degree corner on you, which suits the RC's 'blink-and-you're-over' chassis very nicely indeed.

It's been a long while since I felt like I had a county to myself and even longer since I felt like I had the right bike to really enjoy it. A bigger sports bike would be frustrating on these roads, but by the time I reach the outskirts of 'Skeg' I feel like we've both had a workout. I'm ready for a cold drink and the KTM's cooling fan is working overtime in sympathy.

We stop to take the obligatory 'bike parked outside amusement arcade' photo (there's nothing else to photograph... nothing... at all) and head for chip-pan-alley, home of a million traditional cafes and tacky seaside shops.

Which is what everyone loves about Skeg-Vegas. No one has tried to rebrand it, no one has turned it into some bohemian, middle class paradise. Southwold, it ain't.

There might be a Starbucks... maybe, but that's as posh as it gets. A proper, old-fashioned British seaside town; comfort food, all kinds of weather and lagered-up Lotharios. Heading home, I get a bit lost, and

with the KTM's fuel light flashing I have to head back to the main road and all the traffic. I'm feeling good though, and confident in the RC's ability to find the gaps and punch briskly through them. Which reminds me of the KTM's one big weakness – those flipping horrible mirrors. How can something so huge be so useless? It doesn't matter whether I put elbows out, in, up or down, they are still all I can see. Usually, it's not too much of a problem – there's never a lot behind me – but in traffic, with a lot of other bikes on the road, many of them braver than me between cars, I need to know what's out there.

So it's back to the old way – looking over my shoulder, and once I've stopped for fuel I can head for the back roads again. And talking of fuel... even my most manic riding has still returned 61mpg, which is amazing for a bike with real-world performance to satisfy most riders' expectations.

I've still not done a proper long ride on the bike. It's been a funny kind of summer. Truth is, I haven't missed it and the RC is the kind of bike that doesn't make you feel bad for only being able to snatch a quick blast every now and then. That's my excuse anyway and I'm sticking with it.

The rider JULIE BROWN

Magazine reviewer Julie Brown passed her test in 1995 and has ridden a plethora of different bikes since then. Cruising across America on a Harley, blasting around the Dales on a sports bike, city riding on a moped; Julie is happy on two wheels no matter how fast or slow the speed.



THE BIKE KTM RC390

Cost new: £4998

Performance:
43bhp, 26lb-ft

Wet weight:
165kg

Tank size:
10 litres

Seat height:
820mm

This month

Miles: 174

In total: 2596

Average mpg: 66

Highlights: Early October sunshine, dry, empty roads

Lowlights: Mirrors full of elbows



Retro-spective

A makeover means beauty is only skin-deep, according to the XJR's new owner.

Evenings out are a good way for two individuals to meet up for the first time and break the ice. Being single for the best part of two years, and pretty much undateable, I've had my fair share of 'dud dates' in that time. You know, full of strained smiles and forced laughter. This evening I'm sat opposite an old flame, Yamaha's XJR1300, to see if a warm summer evening out on the roads of Northamptonshire can rekindle a former relationship.

Yes, me and her go back a long way. We first met up in 1995 when I was starting out in motorcycle journalism, and I was a big fan of the way she looked. What got me about the XJR1200 was the sheer simplicity of the lines, the exposed 'proper' air-cooled motor and the naked, no-nonsense approach she had to biking. By the time I actually swung a leg over her in 1999, she'd filled out a bit (by 62cc) but I still enjoyed the easy-going nature of the XJR and her practicality. This is borne out by the fact that many owners tour on this bike – throw-over panniers and a fly-screen is all you need, tank range, 'massive motorway mirrors' and pillion comfort do the rest. With this in mind my evening's meeting with my new partner was going to be interesting.

WEIGHING IT UP

My first impressions are that those long bodily contours have gone in favour of a more stunted look. The plush two-person seat is replaced by a one-plus 'a-bit' seat with pillion pegs. The tank has also slimmed-down and looks pretty, while there is a seemingly smaller headlight and two strange oval number boards where the sidepanels should be. Stop taking things at face value Bert, go ride.

The view through the mildly smoked visor this evening is pleasing: simple idiot lights, a tachometer and speedo, a clock and nowt much else. Finally, twanging myself around the



delightful Northamptonshire evening roads and I'm in heaven. She's still a big lass, but my she can haul up her skirt hems and dance when she wants to. The most impressive thing about the ride is that motor. Top gear at 70mph sees you at around 4000rpm, and what a cool place to be that is – flexibility is the key word here. It's reminded me of what a beautifully simple and effective engine this is. I love it.

If the handling and motive force have won me over, the ergonomics do also, but the practicalities do not. The mirrors used to be big and useful on the XJR and now they are useless. You have to do the funky chicken with your elbows to see anything in

them and the fuel gauge complained it was hungry with just 80 miles on the clocks.

This ex of mine has trimmed down and doesn't have the legs that she used to. Sure, for the younger, more fashionable among us she looks cooler than ever. But if this is 'custom' then I reserve the right to make my mark and plonk a bigger fuel tank, better mirrors and the original tail unit on her. How individual would that be?

This is going to be an interesting relationship, if a little short as sadly Yamaha will be asking for the bike to come back by the end of December. But perhaps before that she should meet some of her forebears?

The rider

BERTIE SIMMONDS

Editor of *Classic Motorcycle Mechanics* and a motorcycle journalist of 20 years, an uncle got Bertie into bikes in 1970s with a spin on a Kawasaki Z550 and he naughtily started riding in his early teens on the school field on a Suzuki X1. He's since gone legit and has owned 30 bikes and ridden many more.



The bike

YAMAHA XJR1300

Cost new: £8599

Performance: 98bhp, 80lb-ft

Wet weight: 240kg

Tank size: 14.5 litres

Seat height: 829mm

This month

Miles: 122 (not had it long!)

In total: 1772

Average mpg: 49

Highlights: Meeting that motor again! Hello, old friend!

Lowlights: The plastic surgery hasn't worked for me. Yet. And the tank seems to have a hole in it

If the handling and motive force have won me over, the ergonomics do also, but the practicalities do not... the mirrors used to be big and useful on the XJR.



The rider

ROGER JONES

69-year-old Roger Jones has been riding since he was 16 – first on a two-stroke Royal Enfield 150cc Prince. He's owned 52 bikes, including an R100RS that he bought new in 1977 and still owns. He joined the International Motorcyclist Tour Club at the same time, and still travels around 8000 miles a year. In 1984 he rode 970 miles in a day; back from the Austrian GP on a 1984 K100RS.



LEFT: A clue to the pushbike race was an abundance of bright coloured bicycles.

Peak District Tour of Britain

160bhp motor, big tank, 260kg plus... yet it took to the trails with ease.

Every year I take a trip over to the Peak District in Derbyshire. It's an awesome place to ride and I anticipated that the 1290, with its long travel suspension, would work a treat on the area's winding and typically bumpy minor roads. Keen to test out my theory, I set aside a day and headed over.

Unbeknown to me, my visit tied in with the running of a stage of the Tour of Britain cycle race. I understand that the section was from Stoke-on-Trent to Nottingham, covering 189km; going through several well-known villages and towns in the Peaks. As a consequence, many of the local roads were closed off, but having spent my younger years trail riding in the area, when I came to roads that were closed, the old memory bank kicked in, enabling me to find alternative routes. In fact, I was able to ride two old trails (very easy ones I have to say) to help the day's progression.

Having never taken the KTM off the Tarmac before, riding it on the loose-surfaced gravel roads was a little daunting. Thankfully, the bike's sophisticated electronics made life easier. By switching the ride-by-wire throttle mode to 'off-road' and adjusting the semi-active suspension to the appropriate enduro setting, the 260kg behemoth transformed into a well suited, trail-friendly motorcycle. Stood up on the pegs, I felt quite comfortable on the well-behaved motorcycle and I had a thoroughly good time.

On this very windy day, a ride down the Goyt Valley, a few miles north of Buxton, found my nostrils filled with the smell of the countryside, to put it politely. The local farmer was muck spreading (or should I say slurry spreading) and I was pooed on from a great height, to the extent that my wet sponge visor cleaner came in for immediate use. After most outings I choose to clean the bike, but riding gear in the

washing machine is an irregular occurrence, thankfully.

The ride home took about one and a half hours and I can tell you that the aroma of the countryside was with me all the way. As a distraction I decided to give myself an overview of the KTM's reliability to-date. Having covered the best part of 5000 miles so far, the chain has not yet needed to be adjusted and the rear tyre is now down to about 2.5mm. I'll have some new boots fitted in time for the next issue, so I'll tell you more about them.



The bike

KTM 1290 SUPER ADVENTURE

Cost new:
£15,999

Performance:
160bhp, 103lb-ft

Wet weight:
249kg

Tank size: 30 litres

Seat height: 860mm

This month

Miles: 323

In Total: 5312

Average mpg: 46.2

Highlights: First excursion off-road

Lowlights: Being covered in muck

LEFT: Beautiful views are everywhere in the Dales.



An alternative view

James Robinson | Ducati Scrambler Classic | Miles this month: 437 | Miles in total: 2303

This month has seen no proper long trips on the Ducati, mainly as I've been away every weekend doing something or other with my old bikes. Consequently, my friend Sarah has been taking up the slack on the Scrambler, clocking up plenty of miles and being able to offer another rider's opinion on the motorcycle.

Having passed her test in 1995, Sarah went on to ride a multitude of sports bikes over the next five years before a new line of work rendered it near impossible to find time for motorcycles. So, after a decade of not riding, the question was whether the appeal of the Scrambler was sufficient to get Sarah back on two wheels more regularly?

Judging by her appraisal of it, you'd like to think so.

"The low seat height made me feel instantly confident on the Scrambler," said Sarah, "and I wouldn't consider lowering it. I would change the clutch lever span, though, which challenged my fingers even when the span was adjusted to its smallest. Initially, I found low speed take off wasn't particularly easy, with the clutch quite harsh and sharp. Also, neutral is not always that easy to find unless you're rolling. Out on the road, I found it doesn't like being in too high a gear through corners, so you need to change down nice and early and make sure you drive through them.

I think I was expecting a bit more torque. It soon got easier, though, and I settled into the Ducati quite happily. The sit-up-style was quite new to me. It does encourage a much more relaxed manner of riding, though, which I found I liked. You can cruise



along happily without it begging and urging to be pinned at every opportunity. The retro styling also won it a few extra points. I guess I really liked it."

Sarah was a fan of the lightweight and manageable Ducati.



Wet weather washout

Joe Dick | Suzuki V-Strom 650XT | Miles this month: 223 | Miles in total: 2786

It's been another busy month, but despite been abroad for the best part of it, I've still managed a good few rides on the V-Strom. I still can't get over how much fun this bike can be, especially when you push on in the twisties, often being capable of surprising my mates on their sports bikes. It's such a versatile motorcycle, equally as pleasurable when just pootling out and about.

Recently, I took the opportunity to get some more skills programmed in and headed over to the Ron Haslam Race School at Donington Park. Naturally, I rode over on the V-Strom so I could have a good variety of riding in one single day. As expected, there was plenty learnt at the race school and I was fortunate enough to have a couple of different instructors to assess and guide, and, boy, was it fun. Not to mention, the pretty awesome pillion lap with the rocket man himself, Ron Haslam.

As pleasurable as the day had been, a lack of heated grips and lashings of rain on the way home tarnished the



day a tad. The screen's slightly too low for me, which meant the fallen moisture was blasted square at my neck. Not cool when you're not prepped for wet weather. This has me

begging the question; maybe it's time to look at a bigger screen for the beast? With winter on its way, now would be the ideal time to get one fitted.

Joe's Suzuki has surprised him with its versatility and competence.



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LONG TERMERS

Ticking off the list

With limited time left, Bruce has been out making the most of the Beemer.

It was a moment I knew was coming, but I didn't expect it to arrive so soon. All of the bikes you see on these pages are only ever loaned to us, so the challenge is to do as much as you can with them before they have to go back. I've had a great year with my Beemer. There's not a part of me that regrets choosing it, but I do regret not making more of the opportunity.

On receiving an email from BMW to return the R1200R, I wrote a list of realistic things that I'd like to do before it went back. At the top of that list was to take my dad out on it. He's been into bikes all his life, currently owns 30 different motorcycles and has owned, genuinely, close on 160 during his 73 years. Bizarrely, he's only ever owned one BMW; an R65. I asked him why that was and he replied, "I just couldn't get on with the clumsy shaft drive." Fair enough, but I figured he needed an education on contemporary BMWs.

Without any doubt, I think the R1200R, complete with its quickshifter and downshifting blipper, is one of the smoothest motorcycles I've ridden. Gearchanges are near enough seamless and there is very little backlash from the shaft, which was the point I wanted to prove. We headed to The Bubblecar Museum in Langrick, a 40-minute ride from home. As it happened, it was another thing to tick off my 'to-do' list...

My three brothers and I grew up with dad's tales of bubblecars, most of which ended in turmoil and plenty of retrospective laughs. Something about them intrigued me, especially the Messerschmitt and BMWs. I soon learned that the BMW Isetta, which was produced between 1955-1965 and saw over 300,000 units built, was powered by half of a boxer engine. Made under licence from BMW, the original Isetta was equipped with a 250cc motor; essentially being half of an R50 engine. Different legislation in the UK meant that the capacity for our home market increased to 300cc, being driveable on a bike licence. With over 60 exhibits on display, the museum proved a fascinating place. Dad had a good time, and admitted he'd been pleasantly surprised by the



The scenic and quiet Lincolnshire Wolds are a great place to explore on a bike.

The rider

BRUCE WILSON

Bruce is MSL's deputy editor. An experienced road-tester, he's ridden almost every bike built in the last 10 years, and many more besides. An endurance racing champion, he's also competed for several years at national level.



The bike

**BMW R1200R
SPORT
EXCLUSIVE**

Cost new:
£11,700

Performance:
125bhp, 92lb-ft

Wet weight:
231kg

Tank size: 18
litres

Seat height:
790mm

This month

Miles: 303

In total: 3945

Average mpg:
51.1

Highlights:
Getting out and enjoying the end of season sunshine

Lowlights:
Having to accept it's nearly time to send the BMW back

R1200R. Comfortable, smooth and physically manageable were some of the compliments he threw its way.

With dad dropped off, I carried on into the Wolds. Despite being halfway through October, the weather was glorious; too nice to head for home without indulging in a long and pointless ride. Lincolnshire is a huge county, and while most people naively assume it's flat, the Wolds soon make people realise that's not the case. Albeit devoid of mountains, the rolling formation of hills is fantastic to explore; littered with an abundance of typically narrow roads. I had hoped to get one more chance to travel them on a bright and blue-skied day before the weather turned bad, and this proved an irresistible opportunity.

The BMW is a great bike for pottering around on, it is easy to ride slowly, and it proving sublimely suited to negotiating the tight turning back lanes that went off in every direction. I had no agenda and there was no time constraint. This was 'me'

time, being perfectly spent on the R1200R, which I've come to love over the season.

Eventually, the fuel light came on and triggered my turn for home, but I wasn't complaining. I'd had a fantastic day and ticked a load of things off that list.



BMW's Isetta bubblecar was powered by half a boxer engine.

A big thanks to Mike Cooper from The Bubblecar Museum for accommodating us. Check out www.bubblecarmuseum.co.uk

Tried & Tested



MAXXIS SUPERMAXX ST

Harder wearing, better grip and more stable than any tyre Maxxis has produced before it...

WORD **Bruce Wilson** and **Karl Stevens** PHOTOGRAPHY: **Impact Images**

The Supermaxx ST is without doubt the most advanced product to date from the Taiwanese

rubber giant. Developed over five years, utilising new construction techniques and mixing processes, the ST is specifically targeted at riders who want to achieve big miles and have plenty of grip along the way, in all conditions. It supersedes the M-6029

Supermaxx Touring, boasting 15% improved longevity thanks to its enhanced Nano-Silica compound, and features a whole new tread design, plus the introduction of sipes, for more grip in the wet. The stability of the tyre has also

been bolstered with a firmer tyre wall while the carcass sees spiral steel belt technology in the front for improved high speed cornering capabilities. The handling characteristics of the tyres have been enhanced by all-new profiles, seeing a 2% broader diameter on the front and a 3.5% increase on the rear.

The culmination of both changes means there is a larger footprint of rubber on the ground, at all angles, while handling is now much more neutral. It all sounds pretty impressive on paper, but to get a truer appreciation for the new rubber we sent Karl out to Spain for a road and track test.

"With it fitted to a huge variety of sports, touring and naked



Both the front and rear tyres now sport Maxxis' spiral steel belt carcass technology.



Good grip, stability and feedback encouraged confidence on the track.



The road test reassured the positive impressions embedded on the race track.



At the end of the test, the used STs looked to be in a surprisingly good state.

bikes, I was spoilt for choice when it came time to decide which bike to try the STs on," he said. "The first part of our evaluation took place at the Ascari race circuit, near Rhonda, where I picked a Kawasaki ZX-10R.

"Maxxis makes no claims that the STs are out-and-out sports rubber, but the more laps I clocked, the better the grip levels got as the compound began to warm up. It didn't take too long for me to gain complete confidence in the tyres, achieving big lean angles and getting quite fruity with the throttle.

"Making the best part of 200bhp, the Kawasaki was capable of braking traction at the

rear wheel, but all slides felt progressive and controllable. Suzuki's GSR750 is perhaps the ideal bike for the new Maxxis, and here the tyres felt a lot more at home; with less ground clearance and softer power delivery, they weren't as close to their limits.

"The tyres felt very stable and accurate, effortlessly taking in the high speed undulations that make up the rollercoaster layout of Ascari. In contrast to the typically flowing make-up of the circuit, there are also a number of hard braking areas; the front tyre's new stiff sidewall aids the ST in retaining its shape, but it was still noticeable to feel a bit of squishing under extreme levels of

braking. Grip, however, was very good and I was impressed by the secure feeling through the lever.

"Sessions completed, there were no signs of chewing, blueing (from the overheating) or excessive wear. According to the Maxxis technicians who flew in from Taiwan, this is all thanks to a new coupling agent called Silane, which contains less oil so doesn't overheat, while also maintaining a soft feeling for a relatively hard tyre.

"But what about on the roads? On a Kawasaki Z800 I was greeted with beautiful stability from the off, and the tyres really took the bumpy nature of the tarmac well. We were taken through some of

the most beautiful routes I've ever seen, winding our way along tight and narrow roads. Grip was commendable, handling felt effortless and I had no moments to recount.

"I was generally very impressed by the STs. They might not pack the brand status of some of their rivals, but costing slightly less than most and performing as well as many other options, I can see the STs going down a treat in the New Year."

Expect to pay around £200 per set, with the following sizes available: Front 120/60/17; 120/70/17 Rear 160/60/17; 180/55/17; 190/50/17; 190/55/17.

The word from the top

Bruce Wilson spoke exclusively to Rudy Versteeg, an ex-Grand Prix level motocross racer and the managing director of Maxxis Europe's Tech Centre...



MSL: How have you improved the tyre's carcass?

Rudy Versteeg: We've bettered the structure of the tyre in many ways. Feedback on our old products made us realise that some people wanted a stronger tyre wall; especially those on hard-braking sports bikes or heavy tourers. To improve this area, we've introduced an all-new sidewall design, which is taller and stiffer than before. Inside the wall is a special V-shaped

piece of rubber, which gives the area of the tyre its strength. We lengthened this and have introduced a much harder compound of material. The result of which has given us a tougher side to the tyre, which aids stability.

Another major change we've made to the carcass is the fitment of a spiral steel belt in the front tyre. We've previously used this technology in our rear tyres, but up until now our manufacturing machines weren't able to produce the technology for our fronts. Instead, they were made of a cross-ply Kevlar-belt design, which was susceptible to compression, hindering stability. The challenge with the front tyre was achieving the necessary tightness of spiral steel belt, for which a specialist company produced a one-off machine for us to accomplish our goal.

MSL: What's so special about the new tread pattern?

RV: We really wanted to improve the stability and the wet weather performance of the product. We began experimenting with a number of different tread designs at the beginning of the ST's development, eventually settling on what we have dubbed the Lightning profile – shaped as the name suggests. It has been crafted in such a way, and positioned in a specific direction, to remove water better than ever before. The new design of tread pattern has resulted in a drastic improvement on wet adhesion, being aided by sipes that help to cut the tyre into the ground and improve grip in the wet. The tread does not extend all the way over the shoulder of the tyres because it would have compromised stability.

MSL: What are the advantages of the new compound?

RV: In the tyre industry there are three major areas of concern; wet grip, durability and rolling resistance. We call these three focuses the magic triangle. It's easy to improve one, but it normally comes at the compromise of the other qualities. For the first time ever at Maxxis, we've managed to improve all three with the ST's compound. It features fifth generation synthetic rubber, which has been mixed differently to anything we've produced before, and benefits from lower heat generation qualities. The mixture sees a greater percentage of silica, to improve wet weather grip, but there has been no detriment to the longevity or grip levels of the compound. During lab testing, we saw a 15-20% improvement on the wear rate, achieving 9000 miles of usage from a rear tyre. The structure of the tyre and the new profiles have helped significantly with the durability of the STs.

Tucano Urbano Ermes jacket

TESTED BY: John Milbank | £194.99 | www.tucanourbano.com

Tucano Urbano gear seems to help even the least fashionable and chubby motorcyclist (i.e. me) maintain a sense of style. The Ermes is a slim fit, with removable CE Level 2 D30 armour in the elbows and shoulders. There's an extra (removable) padded section for your lower back and kidneys, plus space for a back protector.

It has some very nice touches, like the zipped, expanding sections around the hips and biceps, plus a full width zipped vent on the upper back, two on the chest and one under each armpit. Small reflective panels can be popped out from under the cuffs, but these tend to get hidden by your gloves. There's also one tucked away around the softly padded collar, which is more useful. A strange strap is fitted across the inside back, apparently for carrying the jacket across the shoulder... This must be a continental style thing, but it's easy to remove.

There's one large zipped, and another large elasticated pocket inside – perfect for tucking your copy of *MSL* in – plus the two flap-covered pockets on the front and a water-resistant zipped one on the sleeve. Combined with good waterproofing and a removable liner, it makes for a very practical jacket. I've ridden in heavy rain with this jacket, and while it's not the warmest kit I've got, it did keep me totally dry.

A 3D mesh liner prevents the inside getting sticky, and also traps air for insulation. However, as it doesn't extend to the arms, these are noticeably slightly chillier in the wind when riding.

The Ermes is not an all-season garment, as the slim fit – for me at least – precludes too much layering, but as a lightweight, good-looking jacket, it's fantastic for trips out, especially when I want to stop for lunch in the more trendy parts of town.



Shoei NXR

TESTED BY: Carli Ann Smith | £329.99 | www.shoeiassured.co.uk

This lid is wonderfully light – 1300g to be precise. It has a newly-designed shell, which is smaller in size compared to its predecessor, and there's been plenty of testing done in a wind tunnel to ensure it's aerodynamic. Why does it matter? If a helmet isn't aerodynamic, it can put your neck under increased strain and the wind can make it wobble around at high speed. I've done numerous track days, motorway journeys and my regular commute, but the ACU Gold approved shell always feels great.

Three intakes at the front, and four outlets at the back work effectively, while closing them on cooler days is easy with gloves on. I don't ride without ear plugs, but the NXR has large cheek and ear pads to help reduce noise – there's a chin curtain too to stop the wind coming up inside the helmet.

The removable and washable interior is made with moisture wicking and quick drying fabric. It fastens up using the double-D ring system for a snug and comfortable fit.

I really like the visor mechanism – not only is it very easy to remove and replace, it's Pinlock compatible with a fog-free lens included in the box. As with all new Shoeis, the NXR is equipped with its Emergency Quick Release System; in the event of an accident, pulling two red tabs at the bottom of the cheek pads pops them out, making it easier to remove the helmet.

Unlike the GT-Air, the NXR doesn't have an integrated sun visor, but unless that's a priority to you, I'd definitely recommend trying one on for size...



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All Year Biker motorcycle treatment

TESTED BY: John Milbank | £65-£70 | www.alleyearbiker.co.uk

Forget the idea that this is a posh wash for your bike. Besides the fact that the standard of clean your bike gets is fantastic, that's only the first part of this service, which typically takes around an hour and a half.

Roy Cross is the boss of All Year Biker, but he has dedicated agents across the UK – all of whom are passionate bikers themselves – set up to visit you at home, at work, or at an organised event, to completely protect your bike from corrosion for up to 12 months. Rust will creep up where you don't notice it, but once it takes hold, it can spread exponentially. If you can see it, it's probably a lot worse elsewhere!

I had my Z1000SX sorted by Trevor Bridgwood, who covers the Lincolnshire area. It was filthy, but Roy assured me that his agents have dealt with far, far worse... First the bike is carefully prewashed to soften up any dirt and grime. From here, a specialist degreaser is applied, and agitated with a soft brush. It looked great, but he'd only just started...

The next step is a shampoo, which again is a specialist product developed by Roy – an engineer for many years – with a chemical company. While much of the work is carried out with a pressure washer, Trevor is careful to keep the nozzle moving, and not bringing it too close to the machine; "Contrary to what some people think, it's okay to use a pressure washer on a bike," Trevor tells me, "as long as you use it

properly; like any tool." Roy personally trains every one of his agents over a period of three days – he's passionate that every customer should get the same high level of service.

Next is a further application of degreaser – the bike looks clean to me, but Trevor can now see the areas that still have some old chain lube, road grime etc. One of his tips here is that degreaser can quickly get saturated with filth, so spray it on, work it with a soft brush, rinse and repeat – there's no point in just spraying more and more on in one go.

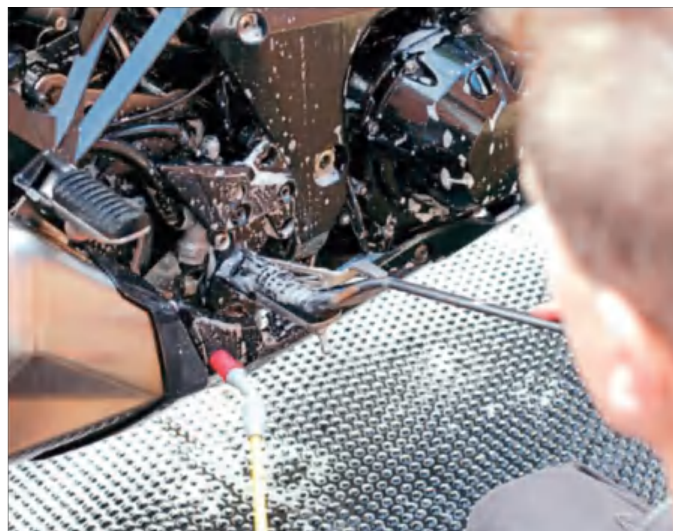
Then it's on to cleaning the brake dust off, and also using a traffic film remover that will rid the bike of any waxes or silicones. When this foam has done its job, the bike is thoroughly rinsed again, including flushing the radiator from its rear, to avoid forcing any flies and other rubbish deeper into the fins.

Finally, it's time to dry the bike – Trevor uses a fresh microfibre cloth to get the bulk off, then a highly powerful dryer, which blows the water clear, leaving nothing lying in any nooks or crannies anywhere on the machine. It's a common mistake to just run a bike to dry it, but that turns the water lying in the engine casing's folds to steam, which can then penetrate the electrical parts where it will condense and become trapped.

And that's the first step done. Next the wheels and brakes are masked off, and a cloth is laid over the top of the bike. Using a compressor and high-pressure



A traffic film remover is just one step in the process of cleaning.



By working into every area with a soft brush, it bought the bike back to fresh-from-the-crate level of cleanliness.



Every bit of old lube is removed during the cleaning process – by the time Trevor has finished, the Kawasaki looks fresh from the crate.



When it looks clean, Trevor goes over it again! Every nook and cranny is left spotless.



A two horse-power dryer is used to blow water from every crevice.



ACF-50 corrosion protectant is sprayed over every surface bar the wheels and brakes.

sprayer, ACF-50 is misted all over, and right into the bike. It's applied in such a way as to blow all the way through the machine, covering every part of the engine and chassis, without pooling or looking sticky.

Any excess ACF is wiped from the bike, as it doesn't bond to painted surfaces. From here, a PTFE-based cleaning wax is carefully rubbed over the paintwork before being buffed to a glass-like shine.

I have to admit that I was sceptical when I first heard about this service – while I don't want Roy to think he should slam the prices up, it just seemed too good to be true. Thoroughly clean a

bike that's in any state, then prep it for up to a year of rust prevention? Offer a certification scheme that's endorsed by a growing list of motorcycle dealers? Easily add £300-£400 or much more to the value when you trade in a bike that's been treated? Reduce the time it takes to clean your bike after the service? But it is all true, and my bike looked stunning afterwards; I now have no hesitation at all in recommending All Year Biker.

"Cleaning your bike shouldn't be a chore taking hours," said Roy. "It should be something you can do quickly then get out and enjoy doing what you bought it for." And he's right – Trevor taught me the

correct way to keep my bikes completely clean, and to do it much quicker.

The ACF-50 will protect the deepest crevices of a motorcycle for a long time, but some of the more exposed surfaces need a bit of a wipe over occasionally – this is easy to do yourself with a can of the product. "One tin should be enough to treat a bike for up to three years," Roy told me. People often think that they need to spray loads on, but it really should be a thin coating to avoid it holding on to grit.

Roy tells me that they've never had to turn away a customer due to a bike being too dirty, but all

bikes are thoroughly inspected first – loose paint or chrome will be shown to the customer, as this will be blown away during cleaning. It's the only way to ensure rust doesn't form beneath it, and having seen it on my old Monster's engine, I know that it's the only way to stop things getting worse.

Whether you want your bike to stay in perfect condition right through the year – especially in Spring when the worst of the salt damage can occur – or you're looking to get the best price when you sell or trade-in your bike, All Year Biker is worth every penny.

Watch the video of my bike being treated at bit.ly/allyearbiker

What is ACF-50?

ACF-50 was developed for the military and aviation industry (the main supplier is Adams Aviation in Surrey). It's an active thin film chemistry that penetrates through corrosion deposits to the base of the area, where it emulsifies and encapsulates any moisture, lifting it away from the metal surface. ACF-50 then dispels this electrolyte and provides an atmospheric barrier that prevents any further moisture contact. This compound continues to actively penetrate the tightest of spaces, dissipating the moisture – even salt water – in these corrosion-prone areas. ACF-50 bonds to bare metal, and remains effective for up to 12 months, gradually disappearing as it is chemically consumed.

Incredibly, it's non-toxic, non-flammable and non-staining. It's fine to use around aircraft electrical systems, which means

there's no bother using it on bikes either. It even acts as a lubricant, and to top it all it brings unpainted plastic surfaces up beautifully too.

Sure, it sounds like snake-oil, but I've been using it long enough now to know it's one of the best investments you can make for your bike. I've also spoken to enough other bikers – as well as professionals like David Angel at F2 motorcycles – who have been using it for many years and swear by it.

I carried out several tests throughout last winter using sheets of bare steel left in the garden, and strapped to the front of my car. ACF-50 outperformed every product I could compare it with.

It's not a complete miracle worker – if sprayed into the hidden areas of your bike it will undoubtedly offer protection for up to a year, but the more exposed areas that are getting

constant abuse from rain and salt will need spraying again – especially the vertical surfaces.

Applied professionally by All Year Biker, ACF-50 will give your

bike the very highest levels of protection. Like most jobs, a lot of the work is in the preparation, so getting it put on correctly makes all the difference.



GS27-Moto Instant Wash and Wax

TESTED BY: John Milbank | £8.75 | www.sweeneymotorfactors.co.uk | 0035 3749 162048

I'm pretty anal when it comes to cleaning bikes and cars – usually going through a long process with two buckets, snow foam and a hard carnauba wax. Often though, especially when photographing bikes, I need to spruce them up much quicker.

This GS27-Moto product is designed to wash and shine a bike without the need for water. It does say on the bottle that heavily soiled areas may need the company's degreaser first. I'd be careful using it if the plastics were covered in sharp grit and mud, but a dusty Versys came up a treat in just a few minutes, without having to use too much of the spray, and only requiring a

bit more work for a couple of really baked-on bugs. The screen in particular looked a lot better than it had in a while...

While it won't leave the deep, mirror-like shine of a specialist protectant, Wash and Wax certainly adds a good lustre to the bike. What's also great to find is that it doesn't appear to strip off any wax you've already applied, making it a superb quick-detailer, especially if you want your bike to look its best at a show when you've ridden there.

Depending how dirty things are, a little goes a fairly long way, and quickly gives your bike that extra sparkle.



Pirelli Rosso Corsas

TESTED BY: John Milbank | Around £240 a pair | www.pirelli.com

The Rosso Corsa is designed for high performance road use and track days – there's a fair stretch of 'slick' at the edges for maximum grip in the dry. While intended to be sticky, there's still a multi-compound rear, designed for better longevity. Certainly, in the 2000 miles I've put on them, there's plenty of life left (the photos were taken shortly after they were fitted).

A great feature of the Rossos – though nothing to do with performance – is the ability to add your own sticker to the sidewall. Design it online using the templates and add a logo, flag or even a circuit graphic, plus a short

word or name to personalise them. For £18 you get six labels and glue – enough for three sets of tyres, as long as you follow the instructions carefully and don't ruin one!

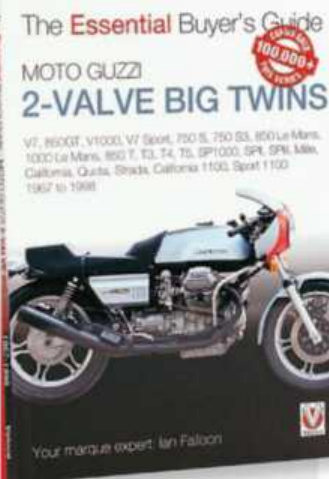
But I probably wouldn't have these tyres again. Not because there's anything wrong with them – far from it, they're perfect for their intended use – but because I need to be realistic about how I ride. I used to believe that I had to have the very stickiest sports rubber, but the reality is that this needs to be warm to work at its best. Not a problem on track or pushing hard on the road, but as it loses its temperature more quickly, it needs to be worked to

get the best out of it. I don't want to push hard all the time any more, and in colder, damper weather I prefer to have a bit more tread, and a tyre that responds more positively when it's not so warm. During one cold spring ride I had the back end spin – it was completely controllable, which is credit to the Pirellis, not my skill, but I'm finally able to admit that the sportiest tyres don't make me any faster.

If you're going to use them properly, the Rosso Corsas are stunning, but if you're not going to be riding hard all the time, you're best sticking with the Rosso IIs, or the new IIs.



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Tried & Tested

Givi Trekker luggage

TESTED BY: John M bank £916 72 www.givi.co.uk 01327 706220

Over the past few months I've made no secret of my passion for the Givi Trekker luggage fitted to my Versys 650. It might seem an odd choice when Kawasaki has built a beautifully integrated pannier system into the bike and its 1000cc brother, but the ease of access here somewhere...

Reason one: Kawasaki's own system is colour-coded, and fits onto the sides of the bike without the need for a clunky frame. But it's more expensive at £1005.50. Having said that, if you bought it with the bike brand new, you might be able to wrangle a deal.

Reason two: The OE luggage will take a helmet in each pannier but it won't take my aptop due to its shallow angled design. The Givi panniers will fit what I need with ease. I have the 33-litre models, which won't take a helmet but the 52-litre top box takes two easily, so it's not a problem.

Reason three: The panniers can be opened fully, or locked so that only the top flapped for quick access to what you need without spinning your dignity underwheels all over the roadside.

Reason four: The standard panniers take 28 litres each but sit wide on the bike than the Givi 33-litre ones. I can fit more pairs of pants in (I'm terrible at packing), and fitting though tight traffic is still that little bit easier.



The panniers can be locked to only open at the top...

The fitting is key for me, and the narrow form of the Versys 650 means keeping the luggage as small as possible is a real benefit during my two up jaunts into the capital. What I also like is just how quickly and easily all of the units can be fitted and removed. Sure, the Kawasaki panniers (also made by Givi) slot on pretty quickly, but I've yet to use anything as simple as the Trekker's they clip onto the rack in a split-second locking automatically. They can then be removed (with the key in of course) just as quickly, and tucked away in the garage until needed again.

The fame isn't the prettiest thing to look at when you consider how tidily Kawasaki made its own system but for me this is a pretty practicality.



...or set to open fully thanks to two clever internal clips

If you have to go on to need the extra luggage of panniers, then go for soft throw-overs, and make do with a top box for day-to-day use. Personally, I find myself with the three boxes fitted for a lot of my journeys, so I'm not worried what it looks like without them. And besides, I can't see it when I'm riding.

Not everything works in the Trekker's favour though. The boxes look rugged and the thick plastic and metal construction are very tough, much more resilient than many other luggage options – but it comes at the cost of weight. A standard Kawasaki pannier weighs 3.9kg when empty but a 33-litre Trekker weighs 5.4kg and that's without taking into account the extra mass of the mounting frame. The 52-litre



The top box is rated to 10kg and easily fits two full-face lids.

top-box weighs 5.5kg, so before you add your kit, it's a fair old mass to carry on your bike. But keep in mind that I'm running a 68bhp machine at very light weight bike and that took time to load to. No the need and it's safe to say that while the front end does feel a little lighter, I'm confident that the bike isn't compromised. Even when I've grossly overloaded the topbox the bike has felt stable and secure.

The Givi Trekker luggage system is supreme quality, a standard fit on Aprilia's Caponord Rally. It's versatile, tough and looks great. I can honestly say that, as I'm in the process of choosing the next bike I buy, I'm basing my decision on whether Givi offers a rack to fit this kit. This is luggage to last a lifetime.



I've added the optional padded backrest, which is an essential item for pillion comfort.

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Classic test: **1988 KAWASAKI ZX-10**

At one point the world's fastest production bike, it could have been the first ZZR...

WORDS: Roland Brown PHOTOGRAPHY: Phil Masters





The name is almost the same, but the bike and its personality are very different. Compared to the latest ZX-10R, with its huge horsepower and race-bred technology, the bike that began Kawasaki's aluminium framed four-cylinder line back in 1988 has a distinctly more rounded personality.

Moments after pulling away on this nicely preserved ZX-10, I'm sitting at an effortless 80mph with the liquid-cooled, 16-valve engine purring smoothly below. The fairing and tall screen are doing a good job of keeping off the wind; the wide seat and plush suspension are adding to the comfort. Although this old bike is certainly powerful – a short, violent burst of acceleration confirms that – it feels more like a sports-tourer than a racy super-sports weapon.

Not that Kawasaki held back from describing its performance when it was unveiled in autumn 1987. "The ZX-10 is the fastest and most powerful superbike Kawasaki has ever built," the publicity blurb announced. As a successor to the mighty GPZ900R that had begun the Big K's liquid-cooled, 16-valve dynasty four years earlier, the ZX-10 was an important bike for Kawasaki, whose engineers were under pressure to come up with a winning format.

The firm had scored a huge hit in 1984 with the brilliant GPZ900R, its first liquid-cooled big four. But two years later that bike's supposed replacement, the more powerful but heavier and bulkier GPZ1000RX, had been poorly received. Its replacement, the ZX-10, had to be significantly better.

There was no lack of effort in its development. Almost every component was new, although the bike's rounded styling echoed that of the GPZ1000RX. Capacity remained at the RX's 997cc, with bore and stroke dimensions unchanged, but the compression ratio was increased from 10.2 to 11:1. Components including pistons, rings, con rods and crankshaft were smaller and lighter. Even the drive chain was lighter thanks to being a new and thinner 532 size.

The dohc valve train was redesigned, with cam drive still on the left but each of the 16 valves getting rocker arms of their own. Valves were bigger, the airbox expanded and reshaped, the semi-downdraft carbs' intakes were smoother and the twin-silencer exhaust system was also new. The result was a claimed 12bhp increase in maximum power, to 137bhp at 10,000rpm, with the peak torque figure of 72lb-ft arriving at 9000rpm.

CORE CHANGES

More important than the extra power was the ZX-10's most significant chassis feature: Kawasaki's first twin-spar aluminium frame. This replaced the 1000RX's combination of steel tubes and aluminium sections. Kawasaki called the design e-box – in



The rear shock's rebound damping adjuster was set in the frame.

Specification

KAWASAKI ZX-10 (1988)

Engine: 997cc
liquid-cooled dohc,
16-valve transverse four

Power: 137bhp (102kW)
@ 10,000rpm

Torque: 76lb-ft (103Nm)
@ 9000rpm

Transmission: 6-speed,
chain final drive

Frame: Aluminium beam

Suspension: (F) 41mm
telescopic; (R) Uni-Trak
monoshock, air
adjustable, adjustable
rebound damping

Brakes: (F) Twin 300mm
discs, twin-piston
calipers; (R) 222mm disc,
single-piston caliper

Tyres: (F) 120/80 x 17in;
(R) 160/60 x 18in
(Michelin Macadam)

Wheelbase: 1490mm

Fuel capacity: 22 litres

Weight: 238kg dry

Supplied by: Classic
Super Bikes, www.
classicsuperbikes.co.uk



reference to the thick perimeter rails' curving, egg-shaped appearance when viewed from above – and claimed it was both stiffer and lighter than the old design.

Other chassis parts were also comprehensively updated. The aluminium swingarm was still operated by an air-assisted single shock, via Kawasaki's Uni-Trak rising rate system. But the front forks were thicker, at 41mm in diameter, and they no longer had anti-dive mechanisms. Wheel sizes were 17in front, 18in rear, replacing the RX's 16-inchers at both ends.

Kawasaki's weight-saving efforts had been partially successful, because the ZX-10 was 16kg lighter than the 1000RX – and it even weighed 6kg less than the GPZ900R. But with a dry weight of 222kg it was still one substantial motorbike, as I discovered at its press launch at the relatively new Jerez circuit in December 1987. My memories of that event are a bit hazy, beyond the vague impression of the bike being fast but not entirely suited to the Grand Prix racetrack. By contrast I have a much more vivid impression of

testing the big Kawasaki on the road a few months later, with a short touring ride from London to south Wales, the bike's pillion seat loaded with my girlfriend and a pair of throw-over panniers.

The ZX was exciting, sure, but mostly I recall that it was impressively comfortable, despite some cold winter weather. In typical 1980s superbike style, it was designed for all-round use rather than pure speed.

MISSING POWER

Unfortunately, the ZX was also typical of Kawasaki's fours of that era in having feeble response at low revs. It pulled smoothly enough from 2000rpm, but there was then a pronounced pause before the real power began to flow at 4000rpm, which made for slightly erratic progress at town speeds.

That hole in the power delivery below four grand was noticeable on the open road too. When a ZX-10 came up behind a car at about 50mph in top gear and its rider accelerated to overtake, for example, the bike was annoyingly hesitant, so one or two down-changes were required to deliver suitably strong acceleration. Large-capacity motorcycles should not have required such assistance, even back in 1988.

But the ZX didn't disappoint for long, because once into its stride the big four shot forward with a force that few rival superbikes could even approach. As I wrote at the time: "In first gear a wrist-twitch at 5000rpm is enough to send the front wheel leaping at the clouds. Back down, into second, and the bike catapults forward until in moments the tach's spitting at the 11,000rpm redline. The ZX is docile one instant, brutal the next."

In those days the UK importers' voluntary power limit of 125bhp (aimed at reducing the threat of more severe legislation) trimmed the ZX's top-end output, but the missing horses could be recovered with a carburettor modification. With full cavalry the

BELOW RIGHT: Brakes would benefit from braided lines.

BELOW: That fairing provided plenty of protection for road riding.





Don't expect to see much happen at lower revs.



This was Kawasaki's first twin-spar aluminium frame.

Kawasaki's blend of smooth, high-revving power and equally smooth, wind-cheating aerodynamics made it seriously rapid. One US magazine tested a full-power ZX-10 at 168mph, making it the world's fastest production bike at the time.

And the ZX's fairing was useful for more than just flat-out blasting. Its screen was taller than the GPZ1000RX's, and sent most of the wind over the head of even tall riders. As I noted after covering several hundred miles on that two-up trip in 1988, this difference was worth more than any dozen extra horsepower. It allowed us to devour stretches of dual-carriageway at speeds I wouldn't dare match on today's camera-strewn roads.

The Kawasaki's chassis also played a big part in its overall road-going speed. That revolutionary e-box frame was suitably rigid, contributing to excellent high-speed stability. Handling was good by the standards of the day, and distinctly better than that of the GPZ1000RX, as much due to the ZX's 17in front wheel and steeper geometry as to its reduced weight.

The bike went round corners pretty well, and had sufficient ground clearance that it wasn't a problem even on track. Its non-adjustable forks were a bit soft on track, but coped well even with aggressive road use. The shock's adjustable air pressure and damping allowed it to be firmed usefully when required. And the Kawa also had a respectable amount of braking power, thanks mainly to the front stopper's blend of 300mm discs and twin-piston calipers.

Practicality was well up to standard too, helped by the roomy riding position, excellent wind protection and good visibility. The dual seat was broad and supportive, the big 22-litre tank gave a genuine 160-mile range, the pillion had a generous grab-rail (which could be unbolted and stored in the tailpiece), and there were luggage hooks below the seat.



A younger – and colder – Roland testing the Kawasaki back in 1988.



Space to tuck behind what was – when derestricted – the world's fastest production bike.

There was even a glove compartment in the fairing, plus a lockable storage area for a toolkit and more in the tailpiece.

That was enough to make the ZX-10 an excellent all-rounder, as at home loaded with pillion and luggage as it was scratching round a track. It proved that on a four-bike trip to the Nürburgring in the summer of 1988; the Kawasaki couldn't match the pace or fun factor of Suzuki's GSX-R1100 or Yamaha's FZR1000 when lapping the 'Ring, but it was voted the pick of the bunch, ahead of Honda's CBR1000F, for the rapid road ride that got us there.

As that suggests, the ZX-10's modern equivalent is not the ZX-10R, despite its name. The model that replaced this bike in 1990 was the ZZ-R1100, a machine whose current, even more powerful descendent the ZZR1400 has a similar blend of performance and long-distance ability. Kawasaki's first aluminium-framed four might have been called the ZX-10, but in style and spirit it was really the first ZZR.

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO RIDE?

The tall, roomy Kawasaki definitely felt more like a ZZR than a ZX-10R as I set off, due mainly to its weight and fairly soft suspension. It quickly brought

What they cost

As with most littler-known classics, the ZX-10's lack of popularity is an advantage if you want to buy one. Even a clean, low-mileage example like the test bike is worth only about £2000, and a scruffy one would sell for much less than that.

The same can't be said of Kawasaki's better-known fours of that vintage.

"A good GPZ900R is worth more than £2000, and a ZZ-R1100 could go for £3500 to £4000 for a mint, low-mileage UK example," says Chris Bunce of Classic Super Bikes (www.classicsuperbikes.co.uk).

"But you'd struggle to get two grand for a ZX-10. It's just not regarded as a desirable classic."

REAR SHOCK

Shock was operated via a Uni-Trak rising-rate linkage, it was air adjustable and also had four-way rebound damping, set via a round dial in the right side of the fairing.

ENGINE

Liquid-cooled, 997cc four was tweaked to give an extra 12bhp, taking peak output to 137bhp, but UK bikes came with restricted carbs that reduced that to 125bhp.

FRAME

Kawasaki's first ever twin-spar aluminium frame, given the name 'e-box' because it looked like an egg from above, was big, rigid and lighter than the RX's steel cage.

FAIRING

Smooth shape is more reminiscent of the ZZR1400 than the current ZX-10R, and the fairing and fairly tall screen combine to make it a fine long-distance machine.

FRONT WHEEL

The ZX-10 came with a 17in front wheel (and 18in rear), in a significant update from its predecessor the GPZ1000RX, which had 16-inchers at both ends.



back some less than good memories with its flat low-rev power delivery and abrupt kick at about 4000rpm. But that was pretty much the limit of the criticism directed at the engine, which was impressively strong and smooth despite its age.

Once the ZX was into its stride there was barely a step in its power delivery, and the big liquid-cooled lump's smoothness made using its revs very tempting, especially as the six-speed box shifted very cleanly. The ZX sat at a smooth motorway speed feeling utterly unstressed, and with a fierce kick instantly available. With the roads crowded, I was even more glad of the ZX's excellent mirrors than I had been in 1988.

Inevitably, the Kawasaki felt a bit unwieldy by modern standards, needing plenty of effort through the clip-ons to push it into a turn, especially under braking. The prospect of riding it on a racetrack didn't fill me with the excitement that it had at Jerez in 1987, when one journo had been lucky to walk away from a big crash at the circuit's fast final right-hander.

Suspension was pretty good given its age, but the bike still felt slightly vague, even after I'd wound the shock's rebound damping adjuster – set into the frame above the swingarm pivot on the right side – to the highest of its four positions. I didn't miss the lack of adjustability up front, but a bit more air in the shock would probably have helped.

Braking was okay, but no better than that. The lever was slightly spongy and could have done with braided lines after so many years, but the Kawa slowed hard

when given enough of a squeeze. Its Michelin Macadam tyres gripped well enough. And that generous fairing and well-padded seat made it as comfortable as my memories of long-ago trips to Wales and Germany suggested it would be.

Even decades later, it was easy to understand why I'd been impressed by the Kawasaki back in 1988, and why those touring trips had been such fun. A good ZX-10 is still one seriously fast and capable sports-tourer.

FRONT BRAKE

A pair of 300mm discs and twin-piston calipers gave reasonable but not exceptional stopping, with no sign of the anti-dive system fitted to the 1000RX.

What to look out for

The ZX-10's liquid-cooled, 16-valve engine is basically very strong and reliable in the best Kawasaki four-cylinder tradition. The firm's first aluminium beam-framed chassis seems to have held up well, too, so if the bike looks and sounds right, it probably is.

"They were affected by carb icing, but you can get a kit for that," says Chris of Classic Super Bikes. "Fitting ZZ-R11 carb tops, like on this bike, releases the full power, so it's worth seeing if that has been done." A noisy engine is most likely to be down to the cam-chain tensioner. "The top ends are bulletproof but cam-chains can be an

issue. The later ZZ-R1100 tensioner fits and is much better."

The biggest problem that Chris finds with Japanese fours of this vintage is lack of use. "They've often been sitting around, so the carbs are gummed up and the air filter is falling apart, or someone has tried to sort out the carbs and made a mess of it," he says. "Then when you ride the bike the fork seals leak, or the carb rubbers are cracked. Before you know it you've spent a grand sorting it out. In our workshop we spend a lot of time fixing issues like that so bikes run properly when they leave."

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APRILIA RS50 owned 3 years, 2004 model, black/green with Monster branding, Carbon exhaust can, 15,452 miles, viewing welcome. Tel. 01745 730095. N Wales



BENELLI TORNADO 900cc, 2012, 2,500 miles, one mature owner, beautiful Italian sports bike, in nice condition, £4000 Tel. 02392 214606. Hants



BMW 1200GS Adventure, 56 plate, 24,700 miles, white, recent MoT, two new tyres, top box OBC heated grips, ABS, £6750 ono Tel. 07849 650637. Cams.



BMW K1200RS 1997, 2 owners, 52k, primrose/graphite, Goodridge lines, factory panniers and tank bag, MoT, garaged, vg thr'out, £1750 ono. Tel. 07896 282012. E Yorks



BMW K1200RS 1997, 32k miles, exc cond, MoT, panniers, really lovely bike, £1950. Tel. 01279 830910. Essex. Email: crossley harlow1@sky.com



BMW K1200S 2005, 27k, modified cam chain tensioner and jump guard, ABS, ESA, h/ grips, factory alarm/immob, factory luggage, MoT, £4500 ono. Tel. 07896 282012. E Yorks.



BMW K75S 1988, comprehensive full rest to mint as new cond, 13,220 miles, MoT, s/h, show, top box and panniers, £3975 firm. Tel. 07429 291775 for details. S Yorks.



BMW R100 Mystic combination, 1994, excellent condition, smart Heddingham ETH sidecar, i/Link forks, twin plugged heads etc, can deliver, £6750 (can deliver). Tel. 01895 624554. Middx.



BMW R1200ST 2005, excellent condition, 26k, fsh, MoT, slimmer than an RT, bar risers, friction c/ control, fender extenders, 60mpg, £3500. Tel. Ian 01162 607758. Leics.



BMW R45 485cc, 23,350 miles only, docs, history, bills, screen box e/ign, MoT, fine cond. Tel. George 07523 971861 or 07591 606806 6pm-10pm only. Surrey.



BMW R80RT has full fairing and luggage, long MoT, good condition, £1960. Tel. 01923 461289. Herts.



BRIDGESTONE 200 Mk K2SS 1969, near concours rest to orig spec, UK reg, MoT, superb example of high performance rotary valve 2T twins, £4250 ono. Tel. 01474 746930. Kent.



BSA A10 Flash, 650cc, total rebuild, many new parts, tax/ MoT, exempt TLS, front brake, excellent condition, the first to see will buy, £3950. Tel. 0115 9322897. Notts.



BSA BANTAM Villiers, trail/trials trim, 1968, tested, free tax, 150cc or 197 to be fitted if you wish, owned since 1997, C15 f/forks and s/arm, great fun, £1450 ono. Tel. 01642 711737. N Yorks.



BSA C15 green, good condition, 1960, 95% complete, £1700 ono. Tel. 01905 821427. Worcs



CAGIVA PLANET 125 perfect for learner, 26k km with new engine at 19k; new: f/pads, gearbox oil, chain, sprocket, spark plug at 21k, £1600 viewing and offers welcomed. Tel. 07593 149399.



CUSTOM BUILT TRIKE complete rebuild at Panther trikes, unique paint work, 1300 VW engine with 'suicide' gearbox, show ready, £15,000 ono. Tel. 07715 554046. Notts.



GILERA RUNNER ST200 scooter 2012 model, 62 reg, 7652 miles on clock, slight scratches but exc mechanical cond, £2250 ono. Tel. 079047 78928. Gtr London.



GREEVES TRIALS 250cc, frame no 24TGS tank, needs work, new shocks, £1900 ono. Tel. 01202 698381. Poole, Dorset.



HARLEY DAVIDSON Sportster trike, 1200cc, white, MoT 2016, low miles, twin clocks, Stage 2 tuned, s/s exhaust, braided brake lines, 2002, £6500. Tel. 07720 899616. Lancs.



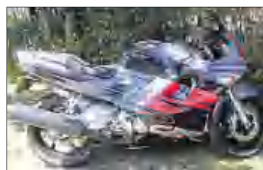
HARLEY DAVIDSON 883XL custom, reg 2005, one owner from new, mileage 16k, MoT till July 2016, many extras, excellent condition, £3495 ono. Tel. 07711 567610. S Yorks.



HONDA CB250N 1979, 30,000 miles, will MoT on sale, good runner, starts first time, new battery, orig toolkit, £650 ono. Tel. 07718 733075. Notts.



HONDA CBF1000 black, T-A GT 2011 (11 reg), 2,977 miles only, two owners, MoT due 01/03/16, fsh, ABS, c/stand, e/start, h/ grips, low seat height, panniers. Tel. 07917 411269. Norfolk



HONDA CBR600F Ltd Edit, 1994, MoT 06/16, good engine, some cosmetic damage on fairing, new battery, orig tool kit, owner's manual, genuine enquiries only. 07787 161810. Essex.



HONDA CBRF-6 600cc, 2006, 22k, exc cond, full s/h, silver/black, Scorpion exhaust, new D.I.D. chains and sprockets fitted, 21k, MoT, £3300 ono. Tel. 07814 308585. Cheshire.

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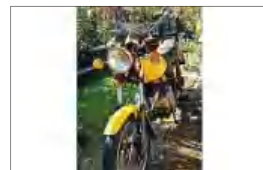
HONDA CBX 1000A 1047cc, 1981, red, 25k miles, MoT May 16, owned for last 23 years, good average standard condition with new tyres & fork seals just fitted, £4950. Tel. 01509 829621. Leics.



HONDA CBX550 F2 550cc, 1982, 38k miles, old MoTs, new front tyre, battery, good all round, £1395 ono. Tel. 079860 59155. Lincs.



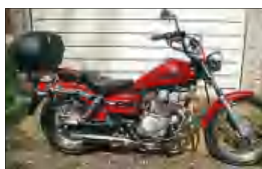
HONDA CD200 Benly, excellent condition, fully serviced, 12 months' MoT, 1950, £1950. Tel. 01923 461289. Herts.



HONDA CJ250T rare yellow, 1979, 18k, orig, requires battery and attention to free up f/brake, clutch and accelerator cables etc, compression good, £575. Tel. 07940 889107. London.



HONDA CL400 2001, old fashioned single, kick-start, 15k miles, one UK owner, new MoT, vgc, utterly reliable and oil tight, £1850. Tel. 01235 799435. priscilla.barry@tiscali.co.uk Oxon



HONDA CMX REBEL 2001, Y, 250cc, MoT Mar 16, new top box with brake light, gc, engine protection bar, as new tyres, suit smaller rider but good fun, £1050 ono. Tel. 01706 875386. Lancs.



HONDA CRF 450cc, 2009, motor cross bike for sale, needs new fork seals, only two owners, has been raced and is in very good condition, £1900. Tel. 07746 879171. Oxon.



HONDA CX500 Custom Classic, 42k miles, good condition, MoT June 2016, £1400. Tel. 01277 230853. Essex.


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HONDA FIREBLADE Urban Tiger collector's model, selling due to old age, low mileage 26,500, excellent history, £2450. Tel. 01902 343743. W Mids.



HONDA GB500TT 1985, 14,550 miles, exc cond, with cockpit fairing, orig h/bars and pieces with the bike history, all MoTs, tool kit, £3900. Tel. 01228 543782 for details. Cumbria.



HONDA GOLDWING 1500cc, F registered, 1989, 88k, MoT, no advisories, gold, subject to a full chassis rebuild 4 yrs ago, recent service, Cadillac exhaust, gc. 07796 946393. Northumberland.



HONDA INTEGRA NC700 62 reg, 6 speed, twin clutch, automatic/tiptronic, ABS, 75+ mpg, 35 ltr, only 12,200 miles, runs and handles perfectly, £5000. Tel. 07798 842421. Somerset.



HONDA NIGHTHAWK 250cc, MoT May 2016, excellent condition for year, nearly new tyres, (year 1995), genuine low mileage, all MoTs. Tel. 01524 733604. N Lancs.



HONDA REBEL 250 2001, excellent condition, 9000 miles, 12 months MoT, ideal commuter bike, £1200 ono. Tel. 01767 448575. Beds.



HONDA VFR1200 2010 model, two owners, s/h, 5k miles, MoT 5/16 carrier, powerful lovely bike, £6000 ono. Tel. 07590 591988. Stirling



HONDA VFR750 1998, Power-bronze screen flame exhaust, cover, tailpack, MoT Nov, will have new MoT for serious buyer now too big for owner, £1100. Tel. 01453 811122. Glos.



HONDA VFR800 1998, 35,000 miles, S/S exhaust, heated grips, s/h, three screens, full luggage, recent new sprockets and chain, not modified, £1900. Tel. 01455 553254. Leics



HONDA XBR500 1989, MoT May 2016, front tyre new, rear tyre new last year, plus second bike for spares or rebuild, £1500. Tel. 07757 279282. Notts.



HONDA XBR500 1989, plus 90% of a spare bike including frame with V5, MoT May 2016, £1500. Tel. 07757 279282. Notts.



HONDA XL TRAIL 185cc, 1981, new tyres, V5, known history, runs fine, £1450. Tel. 074340 40520. Lancs.



HONDA XL185 Trail, 1894, full MoT and V5, s/s exhaust, nothing missing, all clocks, lights, panels, £1450. Tel. 074340 40520. Lancs.



HONDA XL500R 1983, MoT, new tyres, first kick, 1400km, £2100. Tel. 07973 729358. Beds.



INDIAN 741B in military spec, excellent restored condition, early example with round airfilter, history and a V5C, owned six years, £13,995. Tel. 07798 866071. Gtr London.



KAWASAKI A1 Samurai Series 2, 1969, US import with Nova cert and American title, up and running, everything works, ride or restore, £2750 ono. Tel. 01474 746930. Kent.



KAWASAKI 1100 SPECTRE vgc, 99% original, vg orig black chrome exhaust, good engine, 50k miles, needs registering, all paperwork supplied, £1150. Tel. 01617 666353. Man.



KAWASAKI EN500C custom Vulcan, very nice bike recent service & new MoT. Tel. 07597 123507. Glos.



KAWASAKI ER6F black, 2011, MoT 01/07/16, full dealer s/h, 5,286 miles, Pyramid hugger, sports diffuser screen (orig inc), Oxford h/grips, £3100. Tel. Shaun 07920 818249. Norfolk.



KAWASAKI ER6N 2012/61 plate, stunning sage green, MoT till 19/07/16, serviced on 6/08/15, 4,600 miles, h/grips, colour coded top box, garaged, £2900. Tel. 07539 833755. Gtr London.



KAWASAKI GPZ500S 498cc, cherished bike, serviced every 2,500 miles, 33,500 miles, s/s d/ pipes, Hagon shock, new fork seals, head bearings, too much to list. Tel. 07929 075211. Kent.



KAWASAKI GTR1000 1994, burgundy, 32,541 miles, as new Michelin tyres f&r recent r/disc and monoshock bushes, new battery, £1350. Tel. 07434 129349. Derbys.



KAWASAKI KZ1000 California Chips police bike, 1986, UK reg, 1996, needs service & check before it can be driven on road, year 1986, £3000. Tel. 07776 422615. Kent.

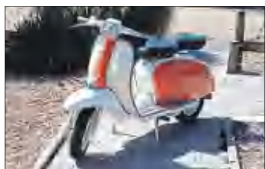


KAWASAKI ZX600 E6F, black, 2008, immac, fsh, orig, first reg 6/6/2008, MoT, Oxford h/grips, Cat 1 Meta alarm (2 fobs), tool kit, all paperwork, £2200. Tel. 01788 810969; 07951 360387. Warks.



KICKER 5150 200cc, Hardtail Bobber, made in USA, v low mileage, good looking bike, 2010 model, MoT Apr 2016, £1150 ono Tel. Peter 07597 084882. Surrey

Classified



LAMBRETTA LI150 Series 3, 1965, bog standard LI no mods to orig Spanish 1965 Lambretta/Servetta factory spec, plenty of new parts, tax free. Tel. 07901 736677. W Sussex.



MONTESA MH200 173cc trials twinshock, 1983 Honda engineered, practice use only, vgc, very orig, Duplex frame classic, £975 could deliver mainland. Tel. 01376 343559. Essex.



MOTO GUZZI TT 650cc, 1985, 29,570km, not standard, MoT on sale, recent tyres, £1300 ono. Tel. 01539 727675. Cumbria.



MOTO GUZZI ZIGOLES (two) both with V5C reg docs, 110cc, tax & MoT expired in July and incomplete 98cc, £2050 ono. Tel. 07840 251105 for more info/pics. ges52@tiscali.co.uk Lancs.



PUCH MAXI original Zippy, kick start, treated for rust and in part restored, carb, tank, new fork bushes, head bearings, best offers over £350. Tel. 07849 876510. Kent.



ROYAL ENFIELD Bullet, 500cc, with cozy combination, 2001, new MoT, very low mileage, always garaged, exc cond, regularly serviced, £3495. Tel. 07908 173894. Dorset



SPORTS RIDER Drive Medical Mobility Scooter, exc cond, hardly used, 28 months old, easy to use controls, 31 mile range, weight capacity 180kg, £1800 ono. Tel. 07982 503414. Suffolk.



SUZUKI black, superb condi, top speed 85mph, economy 65-85mpg, November 2012, 11,616 miles, MRA windscreen, excellent reliable commuter/tourer, £1995. Tel. 01329 663399. Hants.



SUZUKI BANDIT 1255cc, 2010 reg, petrol, grey, 8 months' MoT, 3,399 miles, £5000 ono. Tel./text: Mark 07719 609163. Cheshire



SUZUKI BERGMAN AN400 400cc, fuel injected, first reg Apr 10, met silver, 11k dry miles, full s/h, MoT Aug 16, immac, 100% reliable, accept, £2650 ovno. Tel. 07831 643825. Tyne & Wear.



SUZUKI BURGMAN AN400, 2011 (61) 4,850 dry miles, Summer use only, top box, rack, showroom cond, MoT Apr 16, £3250 ono Tel. 01285 656125. deast136@btinternet.com Glos.



SUZUKI DRZ400S 2000, less than the indicated 17k, Sorned, garaged, polished s/arm, new brake fluid and battery fitted for selling, looked after bike, £1750. Tel. 07500 912419. Worcs.



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SUZUKI GS500F 21,850 miles, crash bobbins, absolutely immac cond, v reliable, owner retiring, £1450; no offers. Tel. 079480 17551. W Yorks



SUZUKI GS600S Bandit, 2001, 7692 miles, clean bike, mint condition, £2200 ono. Tel. 07927 342371. W Mids.



SUZUKI GSX550E Classic, 1986, orig showroom/collector's condition, 20k, good s/h, new MoT, new tyres, plugs, etc, £1850 ovno. Tel. 01573 420520. Scottish borders.



SUZUKI GSXR600 (K3), 2003, 20k, MoT, new tyres, battery, fluids and filters, recent Renthal chain and sprockets, crash mushrooms, garaged, £2595 ono. Tel. 01945 780081.



SUZUKI RF900 1997, only 11,000 miles, MoT until February 2016, immaculate condition, £1695. Tel. 07474 617442. Tyne & Wear



SUZUKI RGV 250M 250cc, J reg, 12 months' MoT, 12,800 miles, very tidy condition indeed, totally standard, £4500 ono. Tel. 01933 355242. Northants



SUZUKI SV1000 K3 2004, good cond, 20k, new tyres, MoT, v reliable, red, tank cover, spare Scorpion silencers, £2350 ono. Tel. 01642 872683; 07766 133748. Cleveland.



SUZUKI SV1000SK4 05 silver, 1,361 miles, like new, kept in garage, some extras, £3200 ono. Tel. 01373 464170. Somerset.



SUZUKI SV650S Race or Track Bike 2007, 12k, twin spark, built to mini twin spec, progressive fork springs, new pads and tyres, £2600. Tel. 01613 711960 after 6pm or 07733 288008. Gtr Man.



SUZUKI X5 200cc, 14,884 miles, for recommissioning new front disc master cylinder, rear shocks, good tyres and engine compression, CDIs, 1979, road test, £800. Tel. 01202 427222. Dorset.



SYM SYMBA 101cc, 2012, MoT May 2016, 1800 miles, 4 speed, electric start, £995. Tel. 01323 841844. E Sussex.



TRIUMPH 21 1960, 53,000 miles, excellent condition, starts and rides well, Meriden blue colour, £2800 Tel. 01522 511660. Lincs



TRIUMPH STREET TRIPLE 675 Naked, brilliant white, low mileage, fitted with Datatool S4 alarm, pillion grab rail, MoT due on 09/06/2016, £4000. Tel. 07854 247313. Durham.



TRIUMPH T-BIRD 1600cc, 2009 immaculate, Sissy bar, fog lights chrome radiator grill, MoT August 2016, £5500. Tel. 01473 747880. Ipswich


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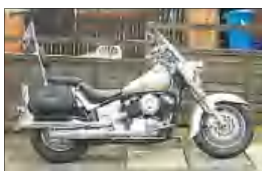
TRIUMPH TROPHY 900cc, water-cooled, 3 cy, good running order, MoT, 56k, water-proof cover, Haynes manual, £950. Tel. 07505 517934; 01243 836097. W Sussex.



VELOREX SIDECAR good condition, some brackets and fittings, accessories as photo, £425. Tel. 01617 666353. Man.



VESPINO MOPED 50cc, 1972, runner wheels rebuild, tidy docs, manual, £700; also wanted Swindon Robins Speedway bar badges, 71-72-73-74, £700 Tel. 01452 410622. Glos



YAMAHA DRAGSTAR 650 Classic, 55 plate, all original 10k miles, 12 mths' MoT, £3500. Tel. 07593 126965. S Yorks.



YAMAHA FZ6 FAZER S2, 600cc, 2007 57 reg, owned from new, MoT to April, 15,000 miles, mint condition, includes top box, £2650 firm. Tel. 07774 855771. Lincs.



YAMAHA SA50E Passola 49cc, low mileage, good running order, £550. Tel. 07975 707493. S Yorks.



YAMAHA TTR250 year 2004, 9500 miles, set for road and trail, AC10 tyres, Renthal chain, USA handlebars, £1500. Tel. John 01253 825655. Lancs.



YAMAHA V-MAX 1198cc, full power carbon fibre look, 2,100 miles, 2002, back rest, engine bars, fly screen, 12 months' MoT, Datatool alarm, £4995. Tel. 07702 471043. Northants.



YAMAHA VIRAGO Trike, 1063cc, good condition, £4500. Tel. 07975 707493. S Yorks.



YAMAHA VIRAGO XV750 dry miles, 14,200 miles, superb condition, garaged, £2500 ono. Tel. 01242 582022. Glos.



YAMAHA YZF125 2011, 10,000 miles, two previous owners, 12 months' MoT, just serviced, very good condition, £2100 ono Tel. 07885 492110. Beds/Cambs border

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HONDA SILVERWING 2001, FJS 600 Maxi scooter, silver, 10,750 miles, fully serviced, MoT, excellent original condition, recent new drive belt, £1475. Tel. 01995 606842. Lancs.

HONDA XL185 1984, V5, MoT, s/steel exhaust, also 1981, in good condition, £1450. Tel. 07843 4040520. Lancs.

TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE 2008, maroon/silver, excellent condition, fly screen, carrier, top box, centre stand, a very clean honest bike, any demo, £4250. Tel. Peter 01282 871958 eves/w'ends. Lancs.

TRIUMPH TRIDENT SPRINT breaking a 1995 bike, some parts available. Tel. 07789 801540. Wilts.

Parts For Sale

GIGI V35N side hard cases, fits PLX mounting kit, includes inner bags, excellent condition, £185. Tel. 07740 909891. Kent.

YAMAHA MT-07 Comfort seat, brand new, cost £185, £140. ono. Tel. 01902 784208. W Mids.

HARLEY DAVIDSON Sun-downer seat, £75; rear fender bib, £25; tour pak with mounting rack, £250; all as new all softail deluxe styling. Tel. 01308 456725. Dorset.

HONDA XL250 garage clear-out: 2 full engines, £180 each; 2 cylinder heads, rocker covers, 4 carbs, lots more, £450 lot; collect. Tel. 074340 40520. Lancs.

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Nuts and volts

Steve Rose



Filtering through early morning traffic on the M25 around Heathrow, watching the never-ending stream of planes taking off got me thinking. We take a whole load of oil from deep underground and burn it back into the atmosphere. How long before the amount removed has an impact on the physics of earth's rotation (it had already been a long and very boring ride)?

In the good old days I might have rung my mate Neil, who knows these things, but he would never be awake at 6.51am. But now, thanks to Google – a 24/7 electronic cyber-Neil – and the monstrous mega-services at Chobham, I can find the answers I want in minutes.

Mankind apparently takes around 93 million barrels of oil out of the ground every day. Each barrel weighs 139kg, which works out at just under 13 billion kg of oil per day removed or just under five trillion kg per year. That's a five and 12 zeros worth of kgs or 5 billion tons if you prefer it (or 12.5 billion Honda Gold Wings in one big bucket). Google also tells me that the weight of the earth is approximately 5.7 times 10 to the power 24kg, which is 5.7 and 24 zeros (maybe 23, it's been a long time).

Now, by my rudimentary early morning arithmetic, that means in the last 12 months we have removed approximately half the earth's mass in oil. And that made me worried – the TDR250 only does 80 miles to a tank so if Mad Max comes true, I'm likely to be the first one strapped to a dune buggy.

But more than that, surely taking all that mass from inside a spinning planet will have massive implications for how our world works. What if the lighter earth spins faster than before? Does that mean a year will now only take six months, we'll have two sunsets every 24 hours and I'll live to be 135? Do I still get a bus pass?

And what if the lighter planet is affected by the sun's gravity differently. Will we be pulled closer to the sun, making the years pass even faster? Will we have three series of X-flipping-Factor every year from now on? And what if the change in mass and faster spinning tilts the planet and dramatically affects the weather? More rain, less rain, solar winds, an ice age? Maybe I shouldn't have been so scorning of electric bikes after all. The electric TT bikes can already go as fast around the Isle of Man as a good 600 Supersport bike and manage 37.73 miles to a charge, so, in theory, we are not that far off a bike with reasonable performance and a 100-mile range. And, surely, the best way to

Living to 183, being impaled on a dune buggy and riding electric bikes. One of these will happen soon.

deal with limited range is to swap batteries at a 'fuel' station, rather than spend eight hours recharging them (which has to be a no-brainer – charging your own battery is like going into a petrol station with a tree and a dinosaur and waiting for them to die and decompose into oil).

Renault tried this in 2010, running an experimental fleet of electric cars on an island called Reunion. The cars had removable battery packs and the idea was that when charge got low the driver pulled into a 'refuelling station' where the battery was swapped for a fully-charged one.

All it would take for this to work commercially would be for the manufacturers to agree on a battery spec and universal fittings, plus an enterprising fuel company to adopt the system and store (and re-charge) batteries on site at their fuel stations. The truth is we probably aren't that far away.

And once we get electric bikes into mainstream usage you can bet your boots that someone will find ways of making way more efficient motors that give increased performance for less consumption so the whole thing would improve again. It just needs someone to get it right enough and cheap enough (pay-as-you-go batteries would make the cost of the vehicle itself a lot less for example).

By the time I reached Woking I'd just about convinced myself that we were going to be okay and even if I did live to be 183, the chances of ending up impaled on Mad Max's buggy were probably slim.

And then I realised my schoolboy arithmetic had let me down. A quick recalculation demonstrated that the amount of oil removed actually works out at 0.0000000001% of the earth's mass per year, not half, so I think, even allowing for another 20 years of oil, we are safe. Phew. I kicked the VFR down a gear and let the VTEC howl past the McLaren factory and all the way to my meeting in third gear. Electric bikes will be brilliant and I, for one, can't wait for that. But for now, there's something about a properly-barbecued hydrocarbon that still does it for me.

Who is Rose?

Steve Rose is a high mileage road rider. A former editor of *Bike* and *RIDE* magazine and one time back street bike dealer, he's also one of the UK's most experienced and trusted road testers

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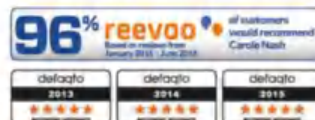
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